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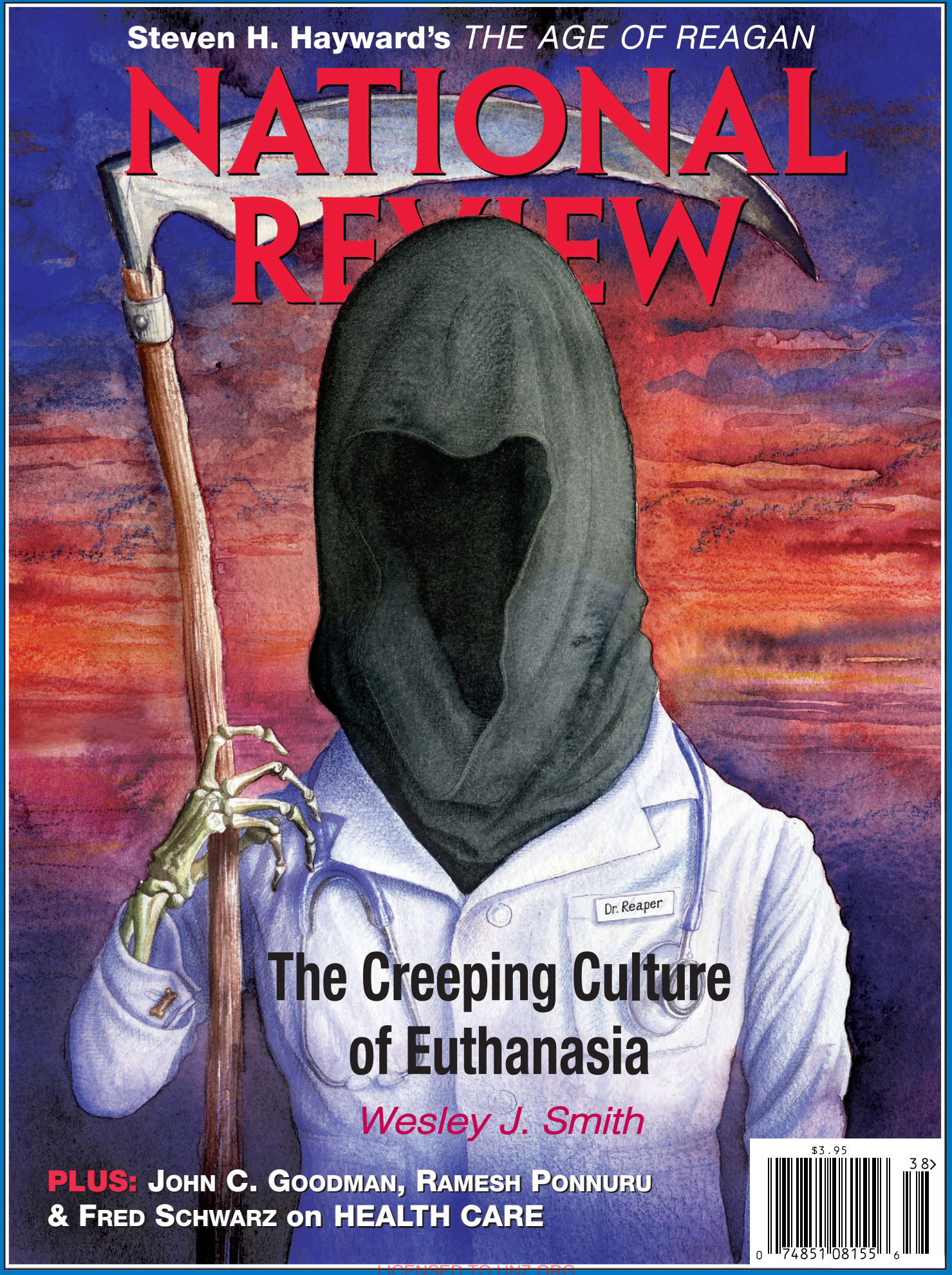

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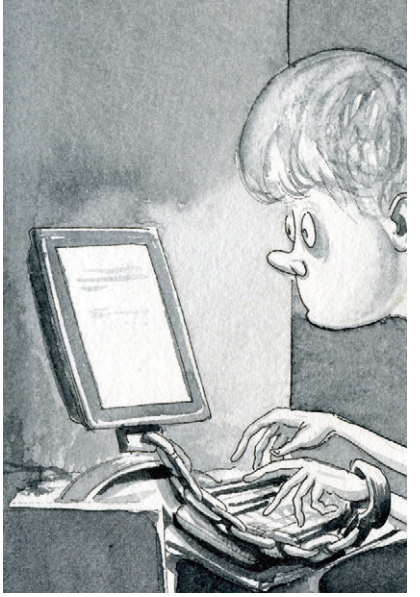

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Letters

The Longevity of Generals

I was troubled by a comment made by Victor Davis Hanson in his otherwise great review of Warren Kozak's book *LeMay: The Life and Wars of General Curtis LeMay* ("American Ajax," August 24). Hanson writes that LeMay was "the longest-serving general in our history." Has he forgotten Old Fuss and Feathers, Gen. Winfield Scott?

Alex F. Wysocki
Wilmington, Del.

VICTOR DAVIS HANSON REPLIES: I think the problem involves the exact (four stars) and generic (one to four stars) use of "general," as well as the difference between modern and 19th-century military usage and parlance. LeMay received his fourth star in 1951, and thus was properly "general" for about 14 years of active service before retiring in 1965—and had 39 years of combined active and retired service at general rank when he died in 1990.

Scott was promoted to brigadier general in 1814, retired in 1861, and died in 1866, so he had the longer tenure at the rank of brigadier general and above (47 years of active service and 52 years of combined active and retired service vs. Lemay's 22 years of active service and 47 years of combined active and retired service). I am not quite sure what the 19th-century equivalent of "general" was (at first probably major-general, and then lieutenant-general), but Scott was promoted to major-general in 1841 (giving him 20 years of active service and 25 years of combined active and retired service). He advanced to lieutenant-general in 1856, giving him five years at that top rank, and a total of ten years active and retired.

Who Needs the *Oxford English Dictionary*?

I recall that Mr. Buckley, after he had read a particular book, would make a list of words from the book that he had not recognized. I often have the same reaction after reading your publication. In fact, sometimes I get the impression that your stable of writers write for one another and not for me.

What prompted me to write was a word from a recent Ross Douthat movie review ("Misanthropy on Tour," July 6). That word was "twee": "touching but not maudlin, and clever but not twee." Just what the heck does "twee" mean? I looked in two dictionaries and that word does not appear.

Kenneth Polley
Reading, Pa.

THE EDITORS REPLY: *Twee.* Adjective. Chiefly British. Affectedly dainty or quaint: "twee writing about furry little creatures." Dictionary.com, dude.

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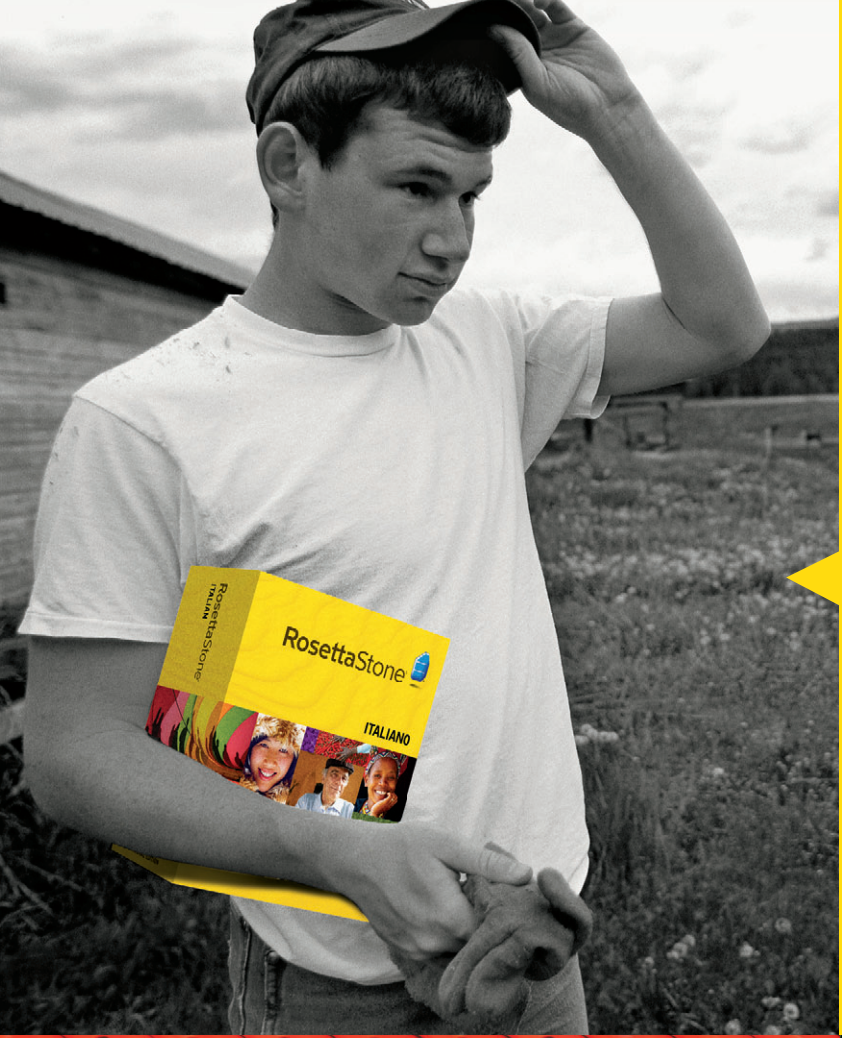

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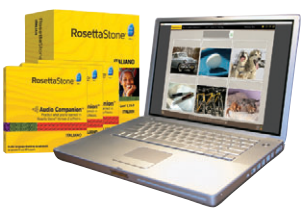

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The Week

■ The bad news for Ted Kennedy is that it's not the press that will be judging him now.

■ We expect demagogues to be fiery, so the fact that Obama is not works to his advantage. But his public case for his signature initiative, on health care, consists of almost nothing but low rhetorical blows. A recent radio address is typical. He devoted most of it to what he termed the "willful misrepresentations"—most of them in fact accurate, as Ramesh Ponnuru details in this issue—"spread by the very folks who would benefit the most by keeping things exactly as they are." He begins the speech, that is, by smearing his opponents and speculating uncharitably about their motives. His peroration returns to the theme: "It has never been easy, moving this nation forward. There are always those who oppose it, and those who use fear to block change." His opponents thus oppose "moving this nation forward"—a formulation that would be offensive were it not so infantile. Obama has talked a lot about health care this year, but at no point has he actually made an honest case for the proposals he favors and dealt fairly with the real criticisms of them. People sense that he is not leveling with them, because he is not. It is now possible to conclude that Obama will not be able to persuade the public to support health-care legislation before the final vote. He will be in real trouble should Americans decide that what lies behind his silky patter is a cool contempt for them.

■ On a Friday afternoon, the Obama White House released a new budget projection that added a cool $2 trillion to projected deficits over the next ten years. The total the White House anticipates is now $9 trillion. The current federal debt is $7.4 trillion, so it expects more than a doubling of debt levels. We have never been balanced-budget obsessives, but the size of the deficits matters. Proposals for a new global currency are more serious than ever before: a sign of international angst about our country's fiscal future. The president likes to talk about "bending the cost curve," but right now it seems to be bending the wrong way—and it may eventually break.

■ George Will urged the U.S. to pull out of Afghanistan and rely on drone attacks and special-forces raids from afar. His column exemplified growing conservative discontent with a war that has been mismanaged, in a ramshackle country with a, shall we say, spotty history of decent governance. But conservatives should hold their discontent in check. It is important to keep Afghanistan from again becoming a haven for dangerous extremists, and the course of the war there will influence the fate of a nuclear-armed Pakistan (if Pakistan thinks we are going to leave Afghanistan, it will have even more incentive to cooperate with terrorists who will ultimately threaten it too). Afghanistan is not in nearly as dire a condition as Iraq circa 2006. Its capital is relatively safe—suffering a major attack only every several weeks—and the areas in the south where the Taliban has had the most success are the ones that we have most neglected. The surge in Iraq shows that classic counterinsurgency tactics work so long as they are supported with enough force (Obama will have to send even more troops) and given enough time (we will have to be patient). The war is far from lost or unwinnable, and deliberately setting out to lose it by pulling out now would be rank strategic folly.

ROMAN GENN

See page 12.

■ Attorney General Eric Holder is apparently not as fixated on the future as his boss, who has repeatedly said he doesn't want to investigate the CIA for what it did in the past. Holder authorized a prosecutor to reexamine cases of alleged prison abuse to see whether they should be investigated criminally. These cases were examined years ago by career prosecutors who declined to take action (except in the case of a contractor who beat a detainee with a flashlight and was convicted of assault). No new information has come to light, and all the obstacles to prosecution that existed before, including the fact that in most or all of these other cases no crimes were committed, are still there—only now there's the additional obstacle of the Justice Department's already having looked at the allegations. Politics must explain Holder's decision: He wants

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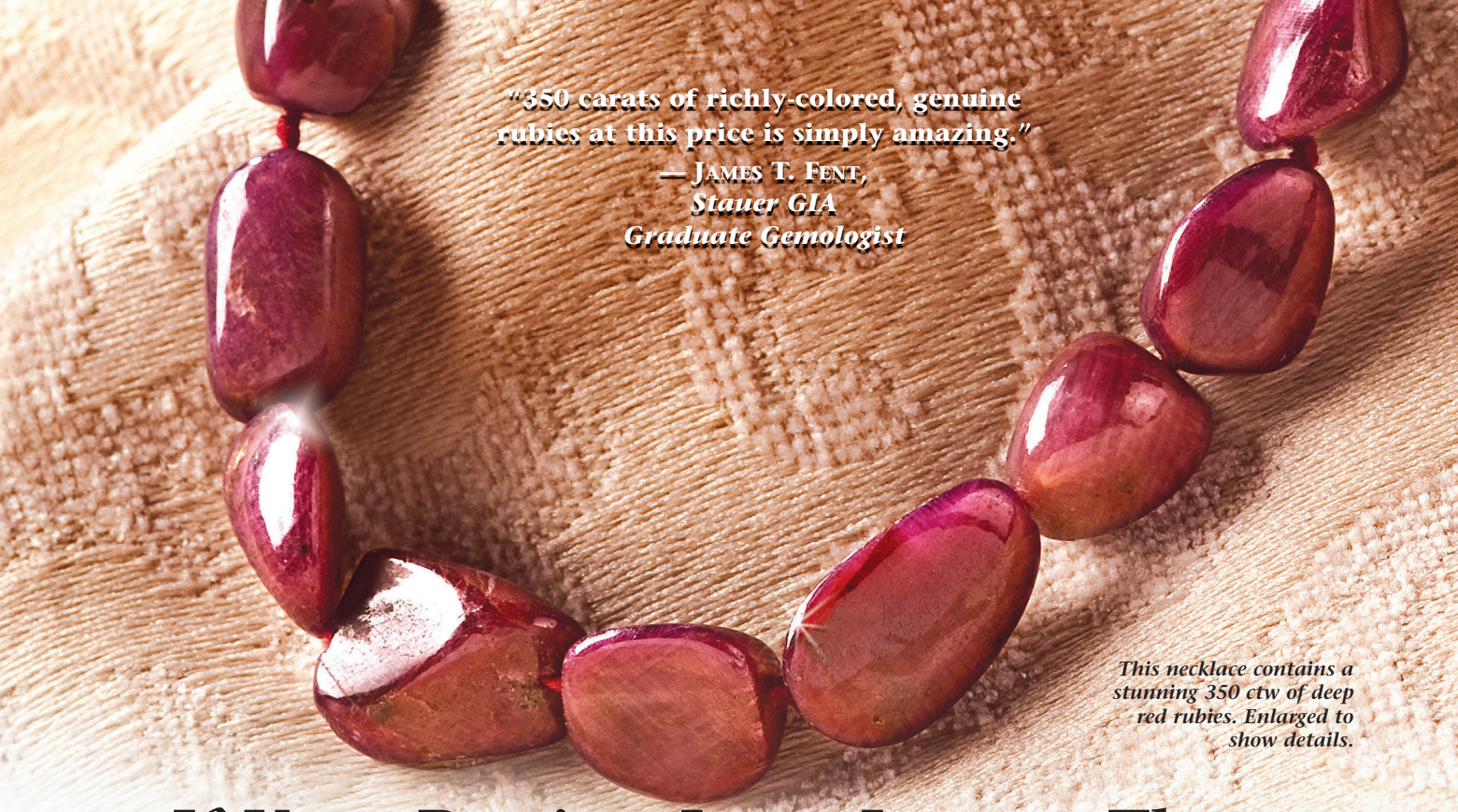
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In the time of chivalry, the regal ruby was considered ***8 times more valuable than diamonds***. Ancient people even believed that rubies were lit from within by an inextinguishable flame. Luckily, after thousands of years reigning as the "King of Gems," the passionate fire inside of the radiant red ruby has shown no signs of cooling. Desire for this sultry, seductive stone is hotter than ever. And at a price this low, it's the perfect time to get things smoldering again.

Genuine ruby for under $2.00 per carat? Believe it. High-end jewelers can sell some rubies for more than $5,000 a carat! We think that's ridiculous in today's economy so we dropped that price by about 99.95%. How do we get our prices so low? Volume. Last year, we believe Stauer was the largest buyer of carat-weight emeralds in the world and this year we're on track to be the largest buyer of carat-weight rubies. At 350 carats for under $150, we've really outdone ourselves this time. Designed to take her breath away, this windfall of enormous rubies is strung together into an elegant, hand-knotted 18" necklace that secures with a gold vermeil lobster clasp and includes a 2" extender. The size and shape of each stone is unique, with natural color variations from burgundy to bordeaux.

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Free armored safes being doled out to public

Armored Safe giveaway ends public worry for those who rush to buy up hoards of brilliant, never-circulated U.S. Gov't issued coins that will never lose their cash value

■ **HELP IS ON THE WAY:** This never-before-seen photo captures the rapid shipment of free Bankers Armored Safes (left) that are now being shipped to U.S. citizens all across the country. The World Reserve is also making available the larger Bankers Grand Armored Safes (right) free to the general public who beat today's published deadline to buy up the newly released Collection of never-circulated U.S. Gov't issued coins and currency. Those who get through by calling the National Delivery Hotline at 1-866-964-2951 and beat the 7 day order deadline will get the Armored Safes for free.

By Shawn Oyler

UMS - Imagine finally getting something that will never lose its value.

Sounds too good to be true?

Well, it's true and word is quickly spreading about the free handout of Armored Safes that are being stocked full of never-circulated U.S. Gov't issued coins and currency that by law will never be minted again.

These free Armored Safes are being turned over to the general public who make it in time to beat the order deadline for their share of the hoard of brilliant, never-circulated U.S. Gov't coins and currency before the 7 day shutoff.

"The frantic demand for U.S. Gov't coins has caused the U.S. Mint® to officially halt the sale of many of its most valuable coins," said lead consultant for the World Reserve Thomas C. Harris, Retired Deputy Director of the U.S. Treasury Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

"Today, the World Reserve began to release this hoard of U.S. Gov't coins and currency in a free Armored Safe to the general public. Having valuable U.S. Gov't coins serves as an economic life raft. This valuable Collection will never, never, never lose its face value. You will always have something worth a lot of money," said Harris.

Here's the best part, among the U.S. Gov't issued coins and currency that everyone gets is the highly sought after American Eagle 1-ounce silver bullion coin made from solid .999 fine silver, 250 of the first liberty engraved Westward Journey Nickels, a banker's stack of historic $2 bills and a full vault tube of the Presidential Golden Dollar Coins.

Here's why that is so important. Just think if you would have saved the same number of never-circulated Eisenhower Dollar coins from 1974. Remarkably, they would now be worth 500% more in collector value.

This gives you a hint that these are not the same grade as the coins found in loose change, or from the local bank. In fact, these coins remain in brilliant, never-circulated condition if left sealed and untouched.

U.S. Gov't Savings Bonds used to be a favorite way to keep money safe and popular to give as gifts. But no one can take a Savings Bond and go buy something with it.

That's why this hoard of valuable coins gives everyone the comfort of having full control of their money. No matter what, they will never lose their U.S. cash value.

If times ever get really tough any coin in the hoard could be used to buy anything. But unless it is a good reason, only a fool would do that because this personal hoard of money is already worth so much more in collector value.

"So many people are buying up these coins. Even for those people who give away some of their collection as gifts, they are keeping the Armored Safe for themselves," said Robert Anthony, Director of the private World Reserve Monetary Exchange.

"This Safe is one of the absolute best places to keep valuables and important papers. People will now have a safe place to store their wills, guns, jewelry, antiques, keys, coins and even cash," Anthony said.

"The only problem the Safe creates is when it's time to read your Will. You need to make sure everyone knows who you want to leave it to," he said.

"When Americans get their hands on this Safe and their very own personal hoard of U.S. Gov't Coins, they'll really do a double take. Everyone will feel like they just won the lottery," he said. ■

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How to get the free Armored Safes

All those who beat the 7 day order deadline for each personal hoard of U.S. Gov't issued coins and currency from the World Reserve Collection will actually be awarded the Bankers Armored Safes absolutely free.

Eligibility: Certain restrictions apply: Open to the public only, sorry no dealers. Those who miss the 7 day deadline will be turned away from this free offer and required to wait for future announcements, in this or other publications. The entire World Reserve Collection must be obtained to get the safe free. For more information about the larger Bankers Grand Armored Safes please call.

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■ **LIKE WINNING THE LOTTERY:** Everyone gets the personal hoard consisting of 267 never-circulated U.S. Gov't coins and currency including 12 Presidential Golden Dollar Coins in a sealed Vault Roll, a heavy vault brick containing 250 of the first liberty engraved Westward Journey Nickels and, best of all, a solid .999 fine silver American Silver Eagle and a banker's stack of 4 historic $2 bills. If times ever get really tough, any coin in this collection could be used to buy anything. Keep it as long as you can because this hoard is already worth so much more than face value.

■ **NO MORE WORRIES:** Carolyn Ford of Perry Town, OH thought she hit the jackpot when her free Bankers Grand Armored Safe was delivered. "I already have some old coins, but I wanted this whole hoard of U.S. coins as a nice nest egg. I'll also set aside some of my hoard for my Grandchildren. Now I don't have to worry where to keep my important papers and my Grandfather's gun since I have my new safe," she said.

7 Smart places to stash your cash

By Aaron Robinson

So you're still hiding money under the mattress or in the bread box?

Well, you're not alone. Ever since financial institutions have been dropping like flies, millions of Americans have stopped relying solely on their banks.

1. Be sure your bank is insured. If you're not sure if your bank is FDIC insured find out or get your money out. They only have enough cash on hand to cover about 2% of nationwide deposits. So it's not always wise to keep all your eggs in one basket.

2. Start and grow a coin collection. Coin collections are tangible assets that will always keep their face value, instead of just owning stocks that could depreciate or lose you money.

3. Keep cash safe at home. Cash is King. Believe it, but remember not to keep it in a thief's favorite spot; like in the bread box or the mattress. These will never have the protection that a quality home safe can provide.

4. Savings Bonds, an old favorite. Savings Bonds are an easy way for your money to stay safe in the future. However, if lost or stolen they could be difficult to replace unless the serial number was kept in a safe place.

5. Gold and silver still shine. If you own gold or silver, great, hold on to it. But if you don't, one of your best bets is to try to get as many U.S. Gov't issued gold and silver coins as you can.

6. Hold on to real estate. With interest rates at historic all-time lows the market is sure to recover and property values will once again bounce back. So those who hold on to their homes for the long term will likely reap the benefits of these investments.

7. Buy a good safe. Home safes become an absolute necessity during economic turmoil. But, because of the huge spike in recent sales, safes may be hard to come by.

With all this you'll be much safer, just in case your bank is the next to fail. ■

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to placate a Left yowling about Bush war crimes. The danger is that he, like so many prosecutors who were assigned politicized cases before him, will not only ruin the lives of his targets but run amok. The CIA has presumably already learned the lesson that it should never take on a tough mission again, lest politicians turn on it when the political climate changes. Obama wouldn't be a bystander in this matter if his determination to look ahead were sincere and deeply felt. But he tolerates a travesty.

■ Holder's Justice Department also quietly killed an ongoing pay-for-play corruption investigation of New Mexico governor Bill Richardson—a key Obama ally whose nomination to be commerce secretary the probe derailed. Though the Richardson investigation was being conducted by the U.S. attorney in New Mexico and a grand jury, the Associated Press reported that top DOJ officials in Washington pulled the plug. That would reverse Justice Department protocols, which call for local control of public-corruption cases in order to avoid the appearance of politicized law enforcement. The dropping of the investigation comes on the heels of Holder's dismissal of a voter-intimidation case against the New Black Panther Party (one defendant was an official Democratic-party poll-watcher). During the Bush years,

Stimulating Foreigners

LAST winter, when economies worldwide were in free fall, governments everywhere enacted stimulus plans. While the United States passed the biggest, a number of other countries were close behind.

Many of the stimulus plans included policy changes that were in effect by the second quarter of 2009. Since economic data for the second quarter are now available, it is possible to obtain a first glance at the success (or lack thereof) of stimulus efforts.

The accompanying chart provides a scatter plot that relates the size of the economic stimulus between 2008 and 2010 to the rate of economic growth for a sample of OECD countries. Each dot in the chart characterizes the data for a given country. For example, Korea had a stimulus bill that was almost 5 percent of GDP, and posted second-quarter growth of about 2 percent. The line in the chart is a regression line through the data points that reveals the central tendency.

The chart suggests that the stimulus efforts helped boost economic growth in the second quarter. Countries that enacted larger stimulus bills grew faster than those that did not.

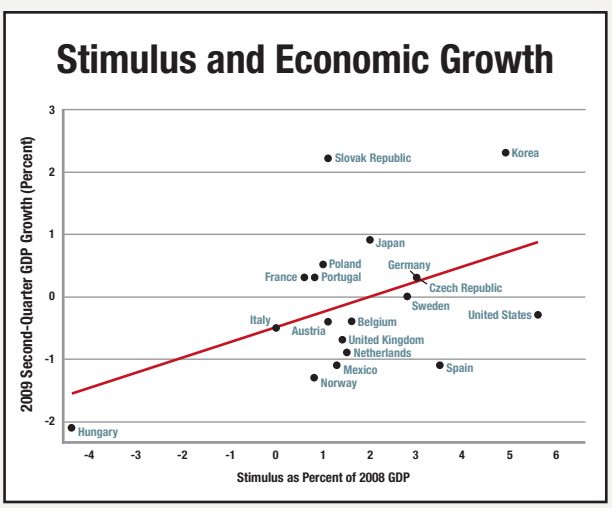
The regression line through the data is statistically significant, and steep enough that one might guess that a chart like this will be appearing soon at a White House near you.

But the relationship is hardly compelling evidence that Keynesian policies were successful. First, the most influential data point in the chart is Hungary, which posted very disappointing growth in the second quarter, and actually enacted a tax increase. The data point is so influential that the relationship between stimulus and growth disappears if we remove it. Cash-starved Hungary increased its VAT from 20 to 25 percent because of the threat that the nation would default on its debt. That this tax hike is associated with weak economic growth is hardly a Keynesian phenomenon.

Second, there was a large difference of opinion among the countries in the chart about how best to stimulate the economy. Korea, for example, adopted a suggestion from Candidate McCain and, among other things, reduced its corporate tax rate. That choice appears to have been a good one. The U.S., on the other hand, took its stimulus bill right from the Keynesian playbook, and got unimpressive bang for the buck. If the U.S. stimulus bill were as effective as the typical OECD policy, then its growth rate would have been about a percent and a half higher in the second quarter. The Obama administration has little to crow about.

As data dribble in over the next few quarters, it seems likely that an updated version of this chart will continue to show at least some positive relationship between stimulus and economic growth. The argument against a big Keynesian stimulus has never been that it will have zero effect. The real problem with U.S. policy will be evident in the medium term, when taxes are hiked to pay the bill for the government's current largesse and the U.S economy finds itself in the same spot Hungary was in in the second quarter. At that point, we will wish that we had taken a path more like Korea's.

—KEVIN A. HASSETT



SOURCE: OECD. NOTE: STIMULUS DATA REFLECT THE NET EFFECT OF STIMULUS PACKAGES ON FISCAL BALANCES FOR 2008–2010 AS A PERCENTAGE OF 2008 GDP (FOR LAWS PASSED THROUGH MARCH 24).

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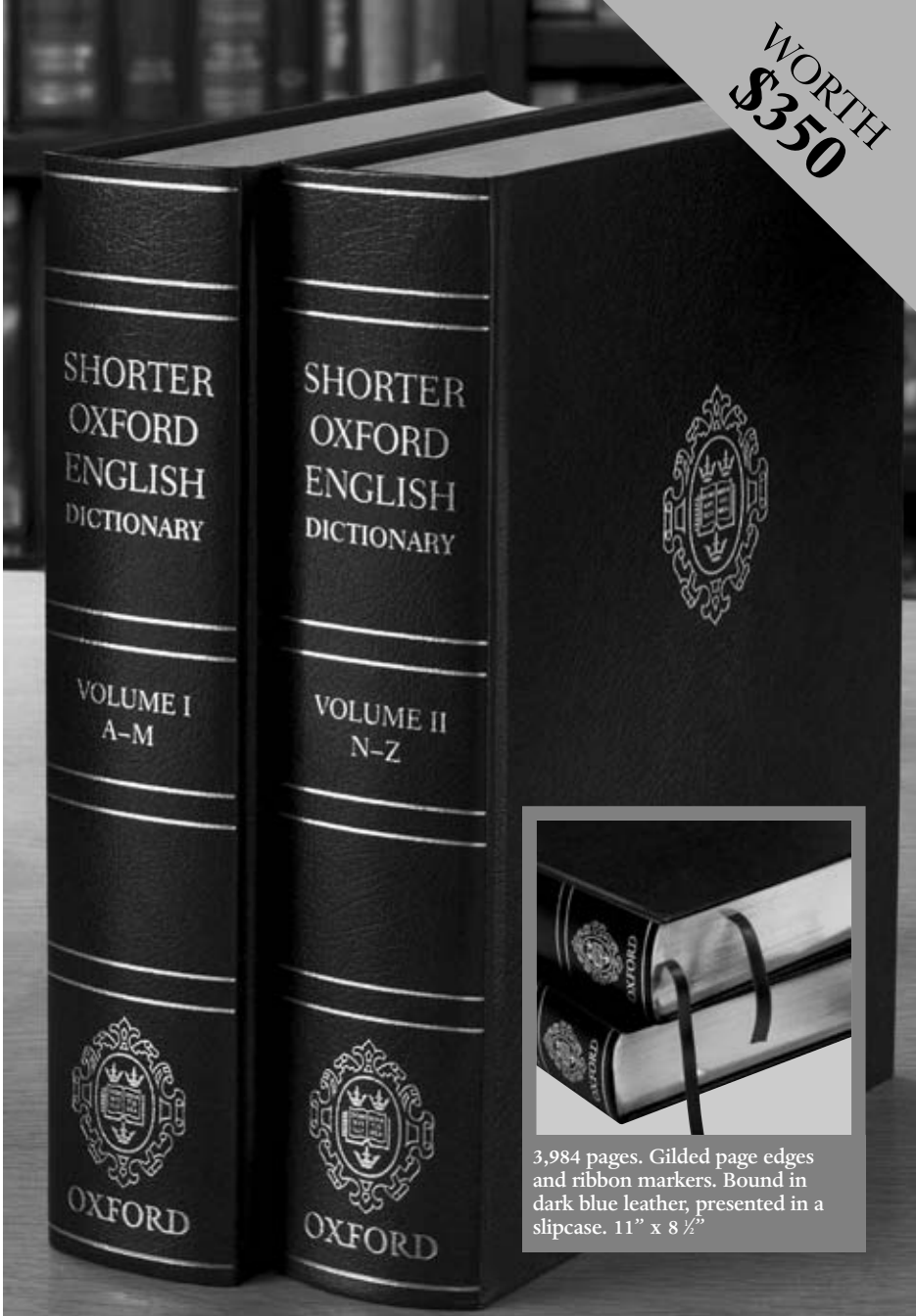

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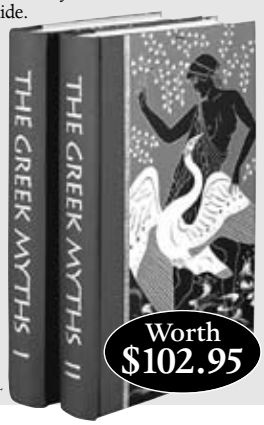

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congressional Democrats worked themselves into a frenzy over the mere, never-substantiated possibility that politics would compromise justice. What will they do now that it's actually happening?

■ The ACLU has hired photographers to surreptitiously take pictures of people it thinks are covert CIA agents. The photos are given to military defense lawyers, who show them to their clients—accused terrorists held at Guantanamo Bay. The idea seems to be to identify the agents who interrogated a given defendant, with a view to calling them as witnesses. Considering that Patrick Fitzgerald spent several million dollars investigating the purported outing of a CIA employee, Valerie Plame, and achieved just one trivial conviction, will the Justice Department pour funds into probing this industrial-scale violation of secrecy? Fat chance. It's much more likely that Holder will ask for copies of the photos.

■ The federal government's "Cash for Clunkers" policy of giving people rebates to trade in their old cars for new ones found a lot of takers, to the surprise of no one—no one, that is, except the federal government. After the first $1 billion ran out, Congress rushed to put another $2 billion into the program. When that dried up, Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood tried to declare victory and go home. We should deny him peace with honor. Cash for Clunkers was neither an environmental nor an economic success. Drivers have an incentive to drive their new vehicles more often precisely because they are more fuel-efficient, blunting the program's effect. The inducement of new car purchases, meanwhile, did not create wealth—it merely diverted consumer spending. What do you call a program that's good for small, concentrated groups and bad for the economy as a whole? One that's bound to be repeated: Cash for Appliances, funded through the stimulus bill, starts this fall.

■ The Obama administration deserves praise for its reappointment of Ben Bernanke, first elevated by Pres. George W. Bush, as chairman of the Federal Reserve. A scholar of the Great Depression, Bernanke is as good a choice as reasonable people might expect this administration to make—really, a surprisingly good one, given President Obama's incoherent economic thinking and the recent decision to install AFL-CIO official Denis M. Hughes as chief of the critically important New York Fed. Bernanke's performance on the Federal Reserve Board has not been without error, and the suspicion dwells within our breast that "Helicopter Ben" may not prove the ablest hand at battling inflation should it arise. But as the markets have stabilized and the banks have started to repay their emergency funds, the prudence of Bernanke's program has been borne out, and the chairman has earned a measure of confidence. His next order of business should be to ensure the orderly retreat of the federal government from the commanding heights of the financial sector.

■ Republican National Committee chairman Michael Steele has taken to the airwaves to vow that Republicans will defend Medicare from any cuts entailed by Obamacare. By further abandoning small-government principles, Republicans hope to gain support from senior citizens. But seniors have already turned against Obamacare because of worries about rationing. All Steele has done is make it easier for those concerns to be dismissed as partisan fear-mongering. The long-term cost of this gambit is to make it harder to reform entitlements should Republicans ever regain power. Machiavellianism may have its attractions, but failed attempts at it are just pitiful.

■ Congress has passed and President Obama has signed a law to make September 11 a "national day of service and remembrance." Sen. Charles Schumer, who represents one of the states attacked on 9/11, sees it as taking "a tragic day in our nation's history and turn[ing] it into a force for good. We can make it a day on which we can give back in remembrance of those who lost their lives." If this is how we start remembering, we won't do a very good job. September 11 was not a tragedy, it was an act of war by primitive terrorists who wish to repeat their success; their victims did not lose their lives, they were murdered. Franklin Roosevelt called Pearl Harbor Day a "date which will live in infamy," and added that "the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory." So long as we are governed by liberal Democrats, they should talk like that.

ALEX WONG/GETTY

■ One relatively easy way to reduce the amount that Americans spend on health care would be to reform the laws governing medical-malpractice lawsuits. At a town-hall meeting in Virginia, Howard Dean explained that there is a reason tort reform is not on the Democrats' agenda, viz. "the people who wrote it did not want to take on the trial lawyers in addition to everybody else they were taking on, and that is the plain and simple truth." The plaintiffs' bar is indeed a large contributor to the Democratic party, with over 90 percent of their campaign pledges going to Democrats. But there is another reason the Democrats left tort reform out of the discussion: They thought they could push through a massive overhaul of one-sixth of the nation's economy without any help from Republicans. Former senator Bill Bradley meekly suggested that the Democrats reconsider their recalcitrant stance in light of recent—difficulties. He argued that by using medical-malpractice reform to peel off a few Republicans, the party's leaders could give Blue Dogs the bipartisan cover they need to vote for Obamacare. The good news is that Pelosi & Co. appear to be ignoring this advice and pushing ahead with their unpopular plan. Better no tort reform than tort reform as a paving stone in the road to single-payer.

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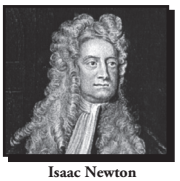
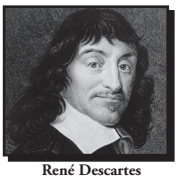
The Birth of the Modern Mind

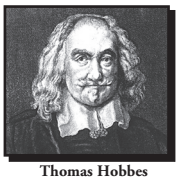
Learn How These Great Thinkers Shaped the Intellectual and Political Revolution of the Enlightenment

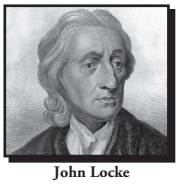
With Brilliant Lectures by Professor Alan Charles Kors of the University of Pennsylvania, Editor-in-chief of the Oxford University Press *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*

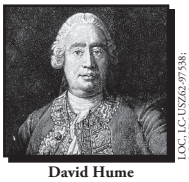

Isaac Newton


René Descartes

Blaise Pascal


Thomas Hobbes


John Locke


David Hume

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As an educated person, you're aware that many of the basic concepts shaping our world are barely 200 years old. Modern science, technology, democratic government, natural rights, and even a general tendency to be open to innovation are a few examples. Our society and culture take them as givens, even while we continue to debate their meanings and implications.

In all likelihood, you have wondered about this conceptual architecture of our modern age. Where did these clusters of ideas come from? How are they related to one another, to ideas that came before, and to our problems today? How did they become so prominent so swiftly?

In **The Birth of the Modern Mind: The Intellectual History of the 17th and 18th Centuries,** Professor Alan Charles Kors makes clear that any search for answers to these questions must reckon with the revolution of the intellect that swept Europe between 1600 and 1800—a revolution whose lights and shadows are all around us still. Changing accustomed ways of thought like few things before or since, it sparked what he calls "perhaps the most profound transformation [ever] of European, if not human, life."

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Professor Alan Charles Kors has lectured on these topics for nearly a third of a century at the University of Pennsylvania, where he has won two awards for distinguished teaching. He is currently the editor-in-chief of the multivolume Oxford University Press *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment.* With his erudition and lecturing skills, he brings history to life in a way you'll enjoy.

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■ A few days before the 2004 presidential election, Osama bin Laden released a threatening videotape. Attorney General John Ashcroft and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld suggested that such an act merited the elevation of the terror threat level, only to be rebuffed by Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge. Now, in his breathtaking tell-all, Ridge writes that the episode was a worrisome instance of the Bush administration's potentially playing politics with terror. Well, at least that's how a hyperventilating press has covered Ridge's tome, *The Test of Our Times*. A full read of the book shows Ridge's words to be but one observation among many about the complicated nature of cabinet discussions during wartime. He could have predicted the resulting media tempest. Maybe his PR strategy should have come with a color-coded warning.

VAN JONES: CARLOS OSORIO/AP

■ It's no secret that Obama has ties to the far Left; during the campaign, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, Bill Ayers, and Bernardine Dohrn were frequent topics of conversation. But this time, as Glenn Beck has publicized, he has brought a former fringe radical into the government: "Green-jobs czar" Van Jones was, by his own admission, once a Communist and black nationalist. He claims to have changed his views, but tends to emphasize that he has changed his *tactics*: "I'll work with anybody, I'll fight anybody if it will push our issues forward. . . . I'm willing to forgo the cheap satisfaction of the radical pose for the deep satisfaction of radical ends." No wonder Obama picked him.

■ The president gave a speech to a VFW convention in Phoenix, and among the crowd outside were about a dozen people carrying firearms. While that might make anyone a little nervous, it's legal in Arizona, so the Secret Service kept close watch but made no attempt to restrain the gun toters. A non-event? Not at MSNBC, where, over a photo of an armed man, commentators pontificated about the racial angle: "Here you have a man of color in the presidency and white people showing up with guns. . . . [There's] anger about a black person being president. . . . We see these hate groups rising up—this is definitely part of that." Only one problem: The man in the photo, which was cropped to show only his torso, was black; he told reporters that he was carrying the weapons "because I can do it. In Arizona I still have some freedoms." The only prejudices on display here are against conservatives.

■ President Obama is not shy about using religious language and religious imagery. He has said that he hopes to be "an instrument of God." (Shouldn't we all.) He has allowed himself to be photographed next to neon crosses (pretty garish). Recently he said, "We are God's partners in matters of life and death." And he accused critics of his health-care plans of "bearing false witness." Perhaps Kevin Phillips should write a sequel to *American Theocracy*.

■ After a long bout of homesickness, Sen. Mel Martinez (R., Fla.) resigned this summer, 16 months before the end of his term. Charged with finding a replacement, Florida's Republican governor, Charlie Crist, tapped his longtime aide George LeMieux (R., placeholder). The pick smacks not just of cronyism but of self-interest, since Crist is already campaigning to win the seat for himself next year. In his way is Marco Rubio, the conservative former speaker of the state house who hopes to topple Crist in the GOP primary. Rubio calls the pick "disappointing," though Crist's choice does give Rubio some needed ammunition. It also gives Florida a senator who fancies himself a "Charlie Crist Republican," which means, of course, a shameless one.

■ Remains there doubt that Charles Rangel is a scoundrel? The millionaire congressman/real-estate investor who somehow enjoys the use of several rent-controlled properties in Manhattan again finds himself exposed for having failed properly to account for his income and assets, both in congressional ethics disclosures and for tax purposes. The latest disclosure, courtesy of a *New York Post* investigation, is that Rangel failed to account for between a quarter million and a half million dollars tucked away in a Merrill Lynch Global account, along with an undisclosed sum in municipal bonds. Thousands of dollars' worth of stock in fast-food operator Yum Brands and in PepsiCo have gone unreported. He also failed to report income—up to $100,000—from his New York City real-estate investments. Altogether, Rangel declined to report about half of his net worth. His rap sheet of prior financial offenses is not brief: He is under investigation by two congressional panels on allegations of improperly accepting gifts from donors (in the form of expenses-paid travel to the Caribbean), ethics violations related to the aforementioned rent-controlled apartments, failure to report income from real estate in the Dominican Republic, unpaid taxes, and abusing his office to shake down parties with business before his congressional committee for donations to his favorite charity: the Charles B. Rangel Center for Public Service. The tax-dodging Rangel chairs the committee that writes the tax laws enforced by the tax-dodging Tim Geithner's IRS: literal limousine liberalism, in action.

■ Picture, if you will, an ordinary suburban gas station. Now remove the pumps and place it in the middle of a wide-open landscape, and you have the Whitetail (Mont.) Border Station, which processes about three visitors per day who make the

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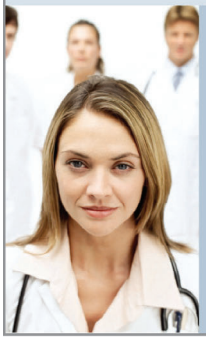

Cysteine Milk Peptide® – Shown in clinical studies to immediately boost levels of Glutathione, which is a substance produced by the body that is needed to break down toxins such as caffeine and alcohol that disrupt our natural sleep patterns.

Vitamin B12 – is proven to cause an earlier release of Melatonin at night, which resets the sleep-wake cycle.

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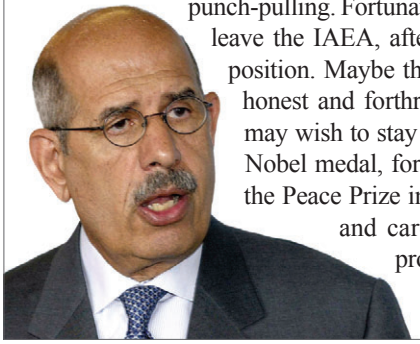
crossing from Big Beaver, Saskatchewan. It's hardly Ground Zero in the fight to secure America's borders, yet this sleepy post has been awarded a $15 million appropriation for . . . well, we're not quite sure what. Neither is Homeland Security secretary Janet Napolitano; at a recent news conference, she did not have her shovel ready and thus could provide no explanation for the grant, but could of course deny that politics was involved. Some might disagree: The Whitetail station was ranked as a low priority until Montana's two Democratic senators intervened. Meanwhile, reports the AP, "a checkpoint in Laredo, Texas, which serves more than 55,000 travelers and 4,200 trucks a day, is rated among the government's highest priorities but was passed over for stimulus money."

■ Back in Cold War days, apologists for Communism had a standard line about human rights. It went, "Western countries have political rights: the right to speech, religion, assembly, and so on. Eastern-bloc countries have social rights: the right to food, shelter, clothing, and so on." (Jeane Kirkpatrick was only one to remark that those countries without "political rights" had very little in the way of food, etc., too.) This nonsense is back. Our new secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, has expressed it several times, most recently saying, "It's important to look at human rights more broadly than it has been defined. Human rights are also the right to a good job and shelter over your head and a chance to send your kids to school and get health care when your wife is pregnant. It's a much broader agenda." It's bad enough when a college professor or a clergyman takes this line. But an American secretary of state?

■ Mohamed ElBaradei has been a depressing and vexing director of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The IAEA is supposed to let the world know about nuclear goings-on. But ElBaradei has been reluctant to do so, in the case of Iran. He told the BBC two years ago, "I wake every morning and see 100 Iraqis, innocent civilians, are dying. . . . I have no brief other than to make sure we don't go into another war or that we go crazy into killing each other. . . . You do not want to give additional argument to some of the new crazies who want to say, 'Let us go and bomb Iran.'" Recently, his aides said, anonymously, that ElBaradei was wary of releasing an IAEA dossier on Iran for fear of "pushing the U.S. or Israel closer to a possible military strike on Tehran's nuclear facilities" (in the words of the Associated Press). In late August, ElBaradei did release a report: mushy, indefinite, unhelpful—and blatantly punch-pulling. Fortunately, ElBaradei will soon leave the IAEA, after a dozen years in that position. Maybe the world can get a more honest and forthright director. ElBaradei may wish to stay at home and admire his Nobel medal, for he was the recipient of the Peace Prize in 2005. Whether his life and career have increased the prospects of peace is highly debatable.



■ Japan's landslide election, in which the ruling Liberal Democratic party lost power for only the second time since 1955, is being hailed as a "revolution." It certainly marks a significant step in the country's movement toward a more open, competitive political system driven by policy debates rather than by factions and backroom deals. But we do not expect the victorious Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), formed just eleven years ago, to make revolutionary changes. It is fiercely divided over everything from economic liberalization to relations with the United States; meanwhile, Japan's elite bureaucrats (the *kanryo*), though weakened, still wield immense power and will resist any disruption of the established order. The Japanese economy has officially emerged from its worst post-war recession, but the ferocity of the downturn underscores Japan's need to reduce its dependence on exports and adopt broad structural reforms. Unfortunately, DPJ leader Yukio Hatoyama is busy denouncing "unrestrained market fundamentalism" and declaring that "the era of U.S.-led globalism is coming to an end." Hatoyama has also expressed a desire to put the U.S.-Japan alliance "on an equal footing" (whatever that means). Practical realities will promote continuity in Japanese foreign policy. But Hatoyama does not inspire confidence.

■ Taro Aso, the outgoing Japanese prime minister, has done something remarkable. In a ceremony marking the end of World War II, he said, "Our country inflicted tremendous damage and suffering on many countries, particularly people in Asia. As a representative of the Japanese people, I humbly express my remorse for the victims, along with deep regret." And he vowed that Japan would never again behave as it had. There are times for national apologies, and times when such apologies are stupid or cheap, meant only to flatter the apologizers—President Obama's recent utterances in Europe and elsewhere come to mind. At that World War II ceremony, Aso performed well.

■ In late August, the State Department announced that it was suspending "non-emergency, non-immigrant visa services" at the U.S. embassy in Honduras, as a way of pressuring the interim Honduran government to reinstall the exiled Manuel Zelaya as president. The Obama administration is also threatening to freeze all aid to Honduras. Meanwhile, interim Honduran leader Roberto Micheletti has declared his willingness to resign and support Zelaya's return to the country—provided Zelaya does not seek to resume the presidency. The Honduran government considers Zelaya unfit for office, and with good reason. Recall why he was ousted in the first place: As Judge José Tomás Arita of the Honduran supreme court explained in his arrest order, Zelaya was charged with "acting against the established form of government, treason against the country, abuse of authority, and usurpation of power." Shortly after his ouster, former Honduran culture minister Octavio Sánchez noted that Zelaya had "triggered a constitutional provision that automatically removed him from office." Zelaya will be lucky if he avoids jail time. He has no legitimate claim to the presidency.

■ Desmond Tutu went to the Holy Land, doing his act. He said that Palestinians are "paying penance" for the Holocaust—a view that many Arabs like to hear, and that mires them further

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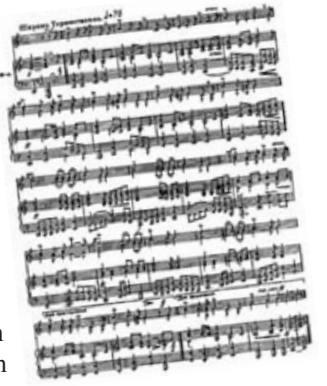
in their misery. He also said, "The lesson that Israel must learn from the Holocaust is that it can never get security through fences, walls, and guns." Tutu may be internationally admired, but it's not for his perspicacity.

■ The Department for Creating Problems Where None Exist is advancing with leaps and bounds. They've banned the traditional 100-watt light bulb in Europe, and anyone found importing or selling them will face criminal charges. By September 2012, the ban will have extended to all "traditional" light bulbs. The new fluorescent or energy-saving bulbs produce an ugly light, can't be recycled as easily on account of their components (one of which is toxic mercury), and, finally, trigger migraines. Not to be outdone in this area, British officials have come up with the notion that injury owing to alcohol-fueled violence and crime has nothing to do with drinkers, but is caused chiefly by the glasses normally used to serve beer in pubs. To protect the nation, they're calling on experts to discover some way of drinking beer more safely. A team of designers is working on plastic or polycarbonate glasses, and their spokesman explains that the solution will require "a complete paradigm shift" in materials and form. Cheers, everybody.

■ The National Endowment for the Arts joined the White House Office of Public Engagement and United We Serve, the post-campaign Obama campaign, in a conference call to 75 creative types. The agenda, according to Patrick Courrielche, a 39-year-old film producer, was to explore "how the arts can be used for a positive change." Artists were encouraged to promote "service" in the areas of health care, energy, and the environment; Shepard Fairey's Obama HOPE poster and will.i.am's "Yes We Can" track were held up as examples of good work. Since Andrew Breitbart's "Big Hollywood" website and Fox News ran with the story, the other participants have clammed up. But if the past is guide, we know what's to come: WPA murals in post offices, Woody Guthrie singing "Roll On, Columbia." Such stuff is bad for two reasons: First, government should not be manufacturing art propaganda; second, the art stinks.

THE ORANGE COUNTY
REGISTER
Sugar high
Local champs
WILDFIRES RAGE ON
LOS ANGELES: Power homes endangered, but blazes still out of control
SAN BERNARDINO: 2,400 houses at risk from pair of fires
Fire forces out famous birds
Animals used in films are being housed in O.C.
STATE LEADER OPPOSES PLANT
RED TAPE GROUNDS PLANES
TO USE FURLOUGHS
DUGARD GIRLS OBSERVED
AUTOMAKERS PLEASED
CAMPED OUT, LOGGED IN
Register parent reorganizes

■ Freedom Communications, one of America's greatest newspaper companies and publisher of the *Orange County Register*, is entering bankruptcy. We wish them a speedy recovery. Thanks to its curmudgeonly founder, the late R. C. Hoiles, the company has long presented a happy case of truth in labeling: Freedom always has been at the center of Freedom's vision. Hoiles, who once dared the wrath of FDR's wage-control cops by giving out unapproved raises, was a longstanding enemy of government overreach in all its forms, from the familiar complaints against excessive taxation to his crusades against the unjust imprisonment of Japanese-Americans during World War II and, later, racial segregation in government schools—and against government schools, period. Of the New Deal, he asked: "Are we intelligent enough ourselves to decide what kind of work we want, how much we should be paid, and how much we should be charged for what we buy, or shall we permit the professional politicians to make these decisions for us?" The question remains relevant. In a mediaverse dominated by illiberal liberalism, the *Register* and its sister newspapers have provided a dose of grit and welcome relief. Long may they continue to do so.

■ The Los Angeles County coroner ruled Michael Jackson's death a homicide, thanks to the cocktail of drugs, topped off by Propofol, his body contained. His feel-good medical personnel will now be on the spot—and rightly so. Doctors should be guided by their healing profession, not by the whims of maniacs—although rich maniacs have a way of getting immoral doctors to serve them. They are a disgrace to their art. There is also a lesson here for anyone in a position of power, from celebrities down to the hierarchs of everyday life: Yes-men never quite give you what you want, but they do have a way of giving you what you ask for.

■ After the 1917 revolution, the USSR adopted the Communist *Internationale* as its anthem. In 1943, with a greatly expanded Soviet empire looming ahead, encouraging rebellion seemed inadvisable, so a new anthem was adopted, with lyrics like "Great Stalin raised us to be loyal to the nation, inspired us to labor and great deeds." A dozen years later those sentiments became obsolete when Stalin fell out of fashion, so the anthem was performed as an instrumental only. In 1977, at what one source optimistically calls "the peak of the Leonid Brezhnev era," a set of new, de-Stalinized lyrics were adopted, and once again Soviet citizens could sing along with gusto (if they knew what was good for them). Another dozen years or so and that version, too, was consigned to the dustbin of history, with help from Ronald Reagan; but in Russia, as elsewhere, the oldies never go out of style, and it was barely a decade before Vladimir Putin revived the Soviet-era anthem with yet another set of lyrics, this time emphasizing Russian nationalism. The man responsible for executing all these successive rewrites, Sergei Mikhalkov, has just died at the age of 96. We hope that his soul's rest will be more peaceful than the probable future of the nation he served. R.I.P.

■ Our colleague of 17 years, Barbara Nowack, secretary to NR chairman Dusty Rhodes, has died of cancer. The cancer was aggressive and discovered at an advanced stage, so the odds of medical victory never favored Barbara. Still, she put up a determined fight—not for any fear of a final judgment, but because of her deep love of creation, her family, her friends, whom she adored, and who adored her. God had other plans. We have our sorrow, soothed by the faith that if anyone is to rest in true and deserved peace, it will be Barbara. R.I.P.

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OBITUARY

Edward Kennedy, R.I.P.

EDWARD KENNEDY entered middle age with three burdens. The first was the decidedly mixed blessing of his family—large and often loving, but presided over by a feral father and a complicit doormat of a mother, then marked in his own generation by the deaths of his three older brothers, leaving him, in 1968 at age 36, the heir apparent.

The second burden was his manifest incapacity for the role. John Kennedy had cool and wit, Robert was smart and driven. Ted was nobody's idea of an alpha, and his record of cheating at Harvard showed that he knew it.

The third burden, self-inflicted, was his criminality. The 1969 death of 28-year-old Mary Jo Kopechne in a car he drove off a Chappaquiddick bridge after a boozy party was at least an instance of gross negligence. His efforts to spin his behavior on the lethal night added shame to folly and cowardice.

So, midway this way of life, what does a Prince Not-Charming do to recover? Ted Kennedy buckled down to the Senate, and to liberalism. He could make a mark on his institution, where not being No. 1 actually helped him wheel and deal with his peers.

He put his newfound skills in the service of the post-Sixties Democratic agenda. In this he betrayed the legacy of his politician brothers, both of whom were restive liberals: John an anti-Communist and a tax-cutter, Robert suspicious of the Great Society even in its cradle (cf. historian Michael Knox Beran). Ted put his shoulder to the wheel and did whatever the *Geist* of his party and his talented aides put before him.

His failed 1980 challenge to Jimmy Carter set the pattern in stone: Since the White House would never be his, he would rather be Left than president.

Sometimes his liberal agenda happened to embrace issues that conservatives could approve, as when he advocated deregulation of the trucking and airline industries. Sometimes he pioneered new lows: His assault on Judge Robert Bork in 1987 sank Bork's nomination to the Supreme Court and inaugurated the modern era of the politics of personal destruction. Not least of his failings was the corruption he spread around him among liberals willing to exculpate his misdeeds, from Ted Sorensen ghosting his Chappaquiddick cop-out down to blogger Melissa Lafsky asking, on Opinionistas.com, whether Mary Jo Kopechne might not think that his post-her career justified her death ("Who knows—maybe she'd feel it was worth it").

His 1992 marriage to Victoria Reggie (he had divorced Joan Kennedy ten years earlier) finally weaned him from man-boy habits, and he tried as he aged and grayed to be an avuncular figure for his many fatherless nieces and nephews.

Dead at 77. R.I.P.

JUSTICE

Britain's Disgrace

THE release of Abdelbaset al-Megrahi is worse than a crime; it is a mistake, from any and every point of view. The terrorist who brought down Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie in Scotland is now back in his native Libya, happily ensconced with his admiring family in a luxurious villa and treated as a national hero. Alleged to be terminally ill, he has been freed from life imprisonment, ostensibly on grounds of compassion—he who showed no compassion to his victims.

The blatant irrationality of Megrahi's release clearly establishes that something more powerful than law and justice is at work. What might that something be? Big money, of course, and the politics that go with it. Moammar Qaddafi, the dictator of Libya for the past 40 years and a man with a long record of sponsoring terror, has stated that the real issue here has always been trade. Megrahi was his agent, and if the British wanted the oil-and-gas contracts now available in Libya, they had to release him. Qaddafi's smarmy playboy son is just as open about it. For the past two years, evidently, British ministers have been putting in place the agreements and the bureaucratic machinery to allow Qaddafi to blackmail them.

Particularly dishonest is the way the British government is pretending that Scotland alone has been responsible for handling the Megrahi affair. The Scots have their own courts, and devolution has given them a new parliament in Edinburgh, but both are limited to dealing with domestic matters. Foreign policy remains the exclusive preserve of the Westminster parliament. This smokescreen of evaded responsibility has ended up doing real damage to the British character and to Britain's global influence. Many in Britain resented the help given in the past by Irish Americans to the IRA; the release of Megrahi cuts the ground from under their feet and challenges the supposed transatlantic "special relationship."

Robert Mueller certainly sees nothing special about it. The current FBI director, who in the early 1990s oversaw Megrahi's investigation and indictment, sent the Scottish justice secretary a blistering letter: "Your action makes a mockery of the rule of law. Your action gives comfort to terrorists around the world." And then he started getting angry. The administration's reaction, on the other hand, was tepid: Obama called the release a "mistake," while Secretary of State Clinton complained in a written statement that she was "deeply disappointed."

Remember the slogan "No Blood for Oil"? At last it has a point.

SUZANNE VLAMIS/AP

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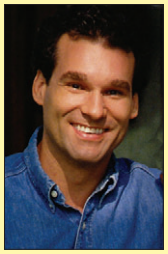

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There Will Be Rationing

Sifting out what's right in Sarah Palin's 'death panels' hyperbole

BY JOHN C. GOODMAN

'Lies and distortions," said David Axelrod in an e-mail to 13 million of the Obama faithful plus an untold number of others who were spammed. He was referring to criticisms of the Obama health-care-reform plan—criticisms that are hitting the mark, to judge by opinion polls and the near-riotous responses members of Congress have gotten at town-hall meetings.

Chief among the White House's irritations is Sarah Palin's accusation that Obama would create "death panels" to decide who lives and who dies. It is true that none of the bills before Congress calls for the creation of such entities, but does Palin's statement, however hyperbolic, point toward legitimate concerns? Is there something we should be worried about? The answer is: Yes, we should be very worried.

Let's start with Obama's repeated insistence that health-care reform will be a failure if it doesn't control costs. Just how do you control costs? All over the developed world, the Left has done it in only two ways: squeezing the providers and denying care to patients.

Yes, I know: You never heard anything about this during the presidential campaign. Candidate Obama promised to control costs through coordinated care, preventive medicine, electronic medical records, and other innocuous measures. Yet at the same time, Congressional Budget Office director Peter Orszag—now head of the Office of Management and Budget and Obama's economic point man—had his staff study these proposals, and the conclusion was: None of them work. So now a new strategy has emerged.

The president let the cat out of the bag in a series of impromptu conversations. He pointed out that his grandmother had received a hip replacement shortly before she died and asked whether giving the terminally ill such treatments is a "sustainable model." "Maybe you're better off not having the surgery, but taking the painkiller," he told another audience.

President Obama was more explicit in his speech to the American Medical Association. We are performing too many tests, too many exams, and too many services of all types, he said. Referring to an article in *The New Yorker*, Obama said per capita Medicare spending in McAllen, Texas, is twice as high as it is in El Paso (both are border cities) but nonetheless fails to achieve better health outcomes. To emphasize this point, Orszag says that we could lower national average health-care spending by a third if all doctors practiced medicine as efficiently as those in the lowest-spending regions.

To make matters worse, the top White House health adviser is Ezekiel Emanuel, brother of chief of staff Rahm Emanuel. Zeke, as he is known in health-policy circles, has written rather extensively on how to ration care. In fact, he has mused that if government-controlled rationing is necessary, young adults should be given priority over senior citizens, because younger people have more years of life ahead of them.

What form will government rationing take? You won't find the answer by reading any bill before Congress. You won't find it by reading any act of parliament in Canada or Britain, either. Governments ration health care all over the world, but rarely do they admit it. (The state of Oregon is the only exception that I can think of.) Rationing Obama-style will be indirect and achieved through administrative decisions, all of them ostensibly made for the best of reasons: to eliminate futile and unnecessary care.

Here's how it will work. The administration is seeking authority for an independent commission to make decisions on reimbursing providers of services through the Medicare program. Currently, a similar commission recommends reimbursement rates, but Congress approves them. This will allow the federal government to use the power of the purse to force doctors to change the way they practice

ROMAN GENN

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medicine. There will be fewer CAT scans, fewer MRI scans, fewer blood tests, and fewer operations, for the simple reason that Medicare will quit paying for procedures it considers questionable. Those who trust the government to make such determinations should remember: The rule-makers in Washington—far removed from doctors and patients—will be under constant pressure to keep spending down.

Medicaid (for the poor) could be used to pressure health-care providers in the same way as Medicare (for the elderly and disabled). But what about private health plans? Under Obamacare, everyone who does not get health insurance through his employer will be required to obtain it through a health-insurance exchange. Small businesses and (in the House bill) large businesses will be able to send their employees to the exchange. No one knows how many people we're talking about, but 100 million or more is not out of the question.

As currently envisioned, private health plans and at least one public plan would compete. The plans would be free to set their own premiums but would have to charge all enrollees the same price, regardless of their health status. Because some plans will attract a greater percentage of sick enrollees than others, a government administrator will have the power to "tax" plans with healthier enrollees in order to subsidize plans with sicker enrollees, through a process called risk adjustment. And it is through this process that the government will have enormous power to control what is done for the sick.

Suppose a plan attracts an above-average number of people whose doctors say they need hip replacements. The company asks the government risk adjuster for a subsidy to cover the cost. The risk adjuster may decide these hip replacements constitute "unnecessary care" or "futile care" and deny the request. In this way, the risk adjuster will effectively force doctors to deny people care.

The risk adjuster will be aided by a national health board, which will do "comparative effectiveness" analyses. If the health board decides that a hip replacement is "unnecessary" or "futile," it will offer cover for the risk adjuster to deny payment and for insurers to deny care.

Former senator Tom Daschle spelled out the idea behind a health board in his book *Critical: What We Can Do about the Health-Care Crisis*, which in many ways is the blueprint for all the congressional versions of Obamacare. According to Daschle, the model to follow is Britain's NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence), which currently recommends against any treatment that costs more than about $45,000 to save a year of life. Because of NICE, British cancer patients are denied access to drugs that are routinely available in the U.S. and on the European continent, and thousands die prematurely.

It is impossible to predict the consequences of Obamacare in fine detail, but on one point all should agree: The burden of proof is on the Obama administration to demonstrate how it can reduce health-care spending without denying care. **NR**

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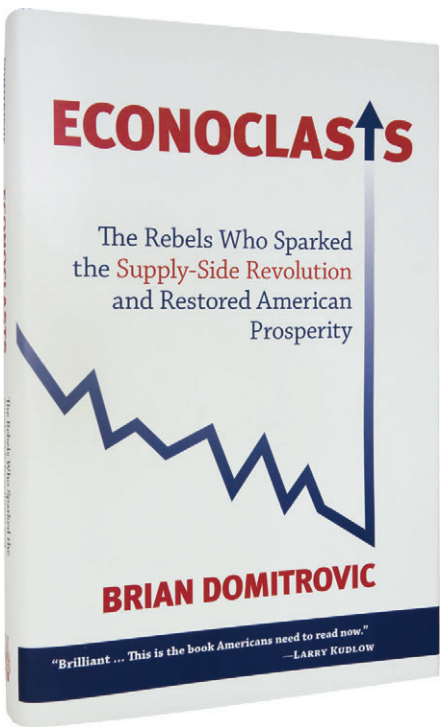
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Obama's False Witness

In accusing the Right of lying about health care, the Left shows its disregard for the truth

BY RAMESH PONNURU

COUNT on it: If liberals lose on health care—either because no major legislation passes or because they consider whatever legislation does pass inadequate—they are going to blame the loss on a campaign of deception by their critics. While liberals have more political power now than at any point in at least three decades, they also have a generation of experience at being sore losers. So the town-hall protesters are going to be 2009's version of the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, *Bush* v. *Gore*, or the people who ran the Willie Horton ads: a way for liberals to blame political disappointment on the perfidy of their opponents and thus make it a token of their own moral superiority. That way, they will not have to contemplate the possibility that the public has a rational basis for opposing their health-care proposals.

On CNN, Richard Durbin, the second-ranking Democratic senator, criticized his Republican colleague John Cornyn for suggesting that the Democrats' legislation would result in a "government takeover of our health-care system." Durbin said, "That isn't in any proposal before Congress today, and I think Senator Cornyn knows that." Durbin kept going: "I've also heard the suggestion that this is going to pay for abortions across America. Not true in any version of the bill. The same thing when it comes to coverage of undocumented people in America. There is no coverage of undocumented people. This idea we're going to take hundreds of billions of dollars out of Medicare—that isn't in there either. There's so much bad information out there."

President Obama is the complainer-in-chief. He devoted his weekly radio address on August 22 to combating what he termed "willful misrepresentations and outright distortions, spread by the very folks who would benefit the most by keeping things exactly as they are." He described the claims about coverage for illegal immigrants, abortion funding, and a government takeover as "outrageous myths." He called for "honest debate." On other occasions he has said that opponents of his health-care policies are fighting it with "fabrications," "misinformation," and "ludicrous ideas" about what's in the legislation.

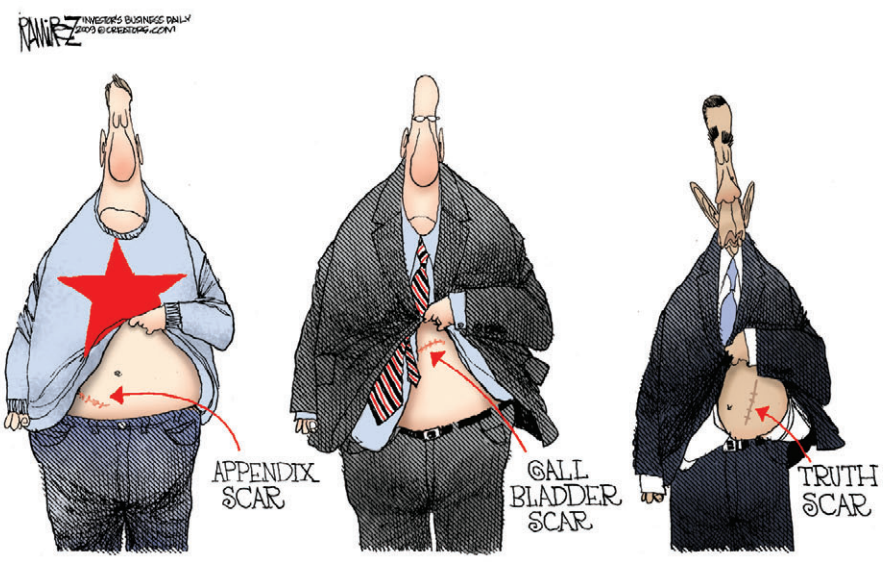
Senator Durbin is right: There is a lot of bad information out there, if the phrase denotes information that reduces support for Democratic health-care legislation. But all of the bad information he cited is either indisputably true or a reasonable opinion. On the issues that Durbin and Obama highlighted, the dissembling is coming from their side.

Even the most hyperbolic claim that the critics of congressional health-care legislation have made—that it would lead to "death panels"—isn't a lie. The people who make this claim believe, first, that some proponents of liberal health-care legislation want to ration care and, second, that passage of the legislation would make that goal more likely. Those beliefs are both sincerely held and true. The phrase "death panels" may mislead some people into thinking that the bill literally establishes a panel that would choose by name who would live and who would die. But it encapsulates a sound argument.

So does the charge that the Democrats' plans represent a "government takeover" of the health-care system or "socialized medicine." The president emphasizes that the congressional bills do not create a single-payer system, as in Canada and Britain, in which taxpayers fund all or nearly all medical care. In August he even said, "I have not said that I was a single-payer supporter." Conservatives called him a liar, since he has in the past called himself "a proponent of a single-payer universal health-care program," but perhaps it was only a slip of the tongue: Maybe he meant only that he has not called for single-payer in the current legislative debate.

Liberals have a double standard on this question. They act as though any conservative who calls the Democrats' health-care legislation a government takeover is uninformed, nuts, or cynically trying to take advantage of people who are uninformed or nuts. But they do not so treat other liberals who say that the bill will lead over time to a single-payer system. The bills include a "public option": a new government-run insurance program open to anyone who wants in. Many liberals, such as the influential health-care expert Jacob Hacker, predict that this new government program will gradually take over—er, make that fill—the insurance market. (Mark Schmitt, writing at the liberal *American Prospect*'s website, says that the public option was *designed* to lead to single payer.) If it is reasonable to think that the bills will lead to a single-payer system, then isn't it reasonable to say that the bills establish socialized medicine?

The only way to answer that question negatively is to deny that even single-payer—a government monopoly or near-monopoly on the financing of health care—would amount to socialized medicine. Ezra Klein has tried this gambit in the *Washington Post*. He notes that in single-payer systems the government does not employ health-care workers or "own the doctors." The distinction between being employed by the government and paid by



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it may not be quite as important as Klein makes it out to be. But his unfortunate choice of the word "own" is instructive. Those of us who favor free-market medicine should be willing to concede that making doctors and nurses slaves of the government would indeed be more collectivist, more interventionist, than single-payer would be. A system that both enslaved the doctors and prescribed strict diets for the citizenry would be still more interventionist.

I bring up these dystopian scenarios to suggest that when we talk about "free-market medicine" or "socialized medicine" we are talking about matters of degree. One could easily make the case that we have a more-than-half-socialized medical system already, given that governments pay for one of every two dollars spent on health care and exert a vast influence on how the other dollar is spent. But it cannot really be denied that the plans Obama supports would yield a still more socialized system. Even if Congress drops the public option, the bills before it would still radically change the business models of health insurers while forcing everyone to buy their products. The resulting insurance industry would be just as "private" as the defense industry is—which is to say that it would be a creature of the government. Socialized medicine is, in short, a fair characterization of the Democrats' legislation.

President Obama affects his familiar air of tested patience when dealing with the accusation that he supports cutting Medicare. Another falsehood, he calls it. In fact, the administration has talked about squeezing hundreds of billions of dollars out of future Medicare spending. Obama could say that he is reducing the growth of Medicare rather than cutting it, but that would require him to adopt a Republican baseline for measuring spending that he would be loath to apply anywhere else. Reading between the lines, the administration's argument seems to be that savings will be made through increased efficiency; if beneficiaries receive the same level of service, their benefits will not have been cut. To doubt this happy story is not to lie.

The administration maintains that it can get $180 billion out of Medicare Advantage, the program that involves the private sector in delivering benefits to seniors, without harming patients. All of the savings will supposedly come from profits and overhead. Yet everyone knows that this hit to the companies will cause them to drop a lot of their customers—which is why many Democrats, hostile to corporate involvement in Medicare, favor it. This is one of several features of Democratic legislation that are impossible to square with the president's oft-repeated assurance that, as he put it in his August 22 address, "if you like your private insurance plan, you can keep your plan. Period."

Obama insists that health-care reform will not result in "government funding of abortions." Those who claim that it will, he told a group of religious leaders, are ignoring the biblical injunction against "bearing false witness." (He did not mention them by name, but the country's Catholic bishops are among those who have borne that witness.) In his radio address he said, "When it comes to the current ban on using tax dollars for abortions, nothing will change under reform." The current ban applies only to programs, such as Medicaid, that are funded in the annual spending bill for the Health and Human Services Department; the bills before Congress create new, separate funding streams for both the public option and for subsidies to help tens of millions of people buy insurance. Under all of the major bills moving through Congress, taxpayers will subsidize the purchase of insurance policies that cover abortion. The House version of the bill explicitly authorizes the secretary of health and human services to decree that the public option will cover abortion using funds from a Treasury account. The Senate bill has provisions that could easily be read by courts to require that private insurance plans cover abortion, too.

The president's insistence that his party's version of health-care reform will not provide coverage to illegal immigrants is, at best, disingenuous. The House health-care bill says that they are ineligible to receive tax credits to buy insurance. But the bills do not require that the legal status of beneficiaries be verified, and in committee deliberations most Democrats have voted against amendments to add that requirement. If the president does not know these facts, surely people around him do. Maybe there is an argument for providing health coverage to illegal immigrants, but the Democrats are not making it openly.

The president is, in fact, a font of misinformation about his administration's signature initiative. Many of his falsehoods are no doubt unintentional. When he repeatedly says, for example, that health-care reform will make American businesses more competitive, he may be unaware that most health-care economists believe that employer-provided health coverage comes out of wages rather than profits. He may not know that the Congressional Budget Office agrees with those economists, or that Christina Romer, whom he appointed to run the Council of Economic Advisers, has described the competitiveness argument for health-care legislation as "schlocky." This schlocky claim has achieved wide currency and a lot of people, perhaps including the president, sincerely believe it. But his false claims are consequential even if not deliberate. Nobody else's words get as much attention; no other individual has done as much to reduce the truth quotient in the health-care debate.

Obama's false claims are consequential even if not deliberate. Because nobody else's words get as much attention, no other individual has done as much to reduce the truth quotient in the health-care debate.

And in some cases, notably those of immigration, abortion, Medicare, and the loss of private coverage, Obama has been misleading in a way that is hard to credit as innocent. On these issues, the liberal accusation that conservatives are lying seems pretty close to a lie itself—perhaps a case of projection.

Americans have increasing doubts about President Obama's agenda but generally like him as a person. They consider him honest and trustworthy, and give him the benefit of the doubt. As the health-care debate continues, it becomes less and less clear that Obama deserves that trust. **NR**

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From the Creators of the Great Society

Obamacare is a tough sell because we've seen how grandiose plans turn out in Washington

BY FRED SCHWARZ

When William F. Buckley Jr. died last year, most obituaries mentioned National Review's dubious record on civil rights. Some of the magazine's statements from that era are indeed difficult to read today, but however incautiously they may have been expressed, it's important to remember that they were motivated partly, perhaps mostly, by small-government principles. In discussing the Civil Rights Act of 1964, for instance, NR cited with approval Barry Goldwater's view "that the bill's famous Title VII, creating the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, would unwisely extend a federal bureaucracy into areas of personal relationship and property management that should better be left to moral suasion and to State regulation."

Anyone who knows what "states' rights" meant in 1964 must shudder at those words; but in retrospect, Goldwater and NR had at least half a point. When the bill was being debated on the Senate floor, one senator asserted that it would make racial hiring quotas mandatory for businesses. Sen. Hubert Humphrey was adamant in his reply: "If the senator can find in Title VII . . . any language which provides that an employer will have to hire on the basis of percentage or quota related to color, race, religion, or national origin, I will start eating the pages one after another, because it is not in there."

There is no reason to doubt Humphrey's sincerity; like many civil-rights idealists, he truly believed in a color-blind future. And yet, less than a decade later, in *Griggs* v. *Duke Power Co.* (1971), the Supreme Court made "affirmative action" all but mandatory. Today, any employment test or requirement on which blacks do worse than whites invites a lawsuit, and despite occasional modest revisions of that ruling, no end is in sight (our current attorney general and newest Supreme Court justice are both fervent supporters of the "disparate impact" standard). So what was sold 45 years ago as a simple, ringing assertion of equality has long since degenerated into a morass of lawyers, consultants, and bureaucrats enforcing the opposite of what the legislation promised.

The following year saw the landmark Voting Rights Act. Buckley thundered against it on similar grounds: "The setting of voting standards—of whatever difficulty—is a legitimate exercise of what used to go by the name of the sovereign power of the states." He wasn't the only one who questioned the constitutionality of giving a federal agency control over state voting laws, but most objectors overcame their scruples in view of the massive historical outrage involved and the limited duration of the act's toughest provisions—just five years. Besides, affected jurisdictions could escape the law's reach by reforming their procedures to boost black turnout. Surely such a targeted and temporary measure was acceptable to reverse a century of injustice.

Since the act was passed, America and the world have changed greatly. Immigration and various social revolutions have transformed the U.S., for good and ill, and technology has made colossal amounts of information available to virtually anyone, virtually anywhere. Ancient battles have been forgotten, new ones have been joined, and younger generations have cast aside old ways. Most notably, perhaps, a black man has been elected president.

Meanwhile, the Justice Department thinks it's still 1965. As Abigail Thernstrom recently wrote in these pages ("Integration Now," June 22, 2009), judges, civil-rights lawyers, and weak-kneed politicians have combined to renew and maintain the Voting Rights Act's draconian restrictions. Even the tiniest change in voting location or procedure in affected areas must be pre-cleared with the feds, and the obstacles that a jurisdiction must overcome to "bail out" of the law's reach are so onerous that very few even attempt it. (One reason it's so hard: All the formulas for deciding what jurisdictions the Voting Rights Act covers are based on data from 1972, with no updates permitted.) While the act unquestionably achieved tremendous things for civil rights, Buckley's worries about the iron grip of federal control have proven all too prescient.

All this helps explain why Obamacare has run into such trouble. Anyone old enough to remember LBJ's civil-rights laws, and the many other reform measures enacted from the Great Society to the present, has learned two things: (1) A federal bureaucracy must either grow or die; and (2) a federal bureaucracy never dies. As the abuses that a law was designed to fight are eliminated, the enforcement apparatus does not shrink to match; instead it expands and finds new abuses—and when those run out, it starts inventing them.

This has always been true, though it took many years for the lesson to sink in. For much of the 20th century, government intervention seemed the best way to tackle virtually any problem. From Progressive-era legislation on workplace safety, clean government, and antitrust into the 1960s and beyond, bold laws and sweeping court decisions made, or seemed to make, great improvements in American life—initially, at least.

The Food and Drug Administration, for example, took shape during the 1930s, a time when adulterated and spoiled foods were widely peddled and consumers laid out large sums for useless or dangerous quack remedies (potions containing radium were a popular pick-me-up). Safeguards were put in place, large strides were made in safety and efficacy . . . and a few decades later, the FDA was trying to ban saccharin and to regulate tobacco as a drug.

The Fair Housing Act of 1968 was enacted to fight discrimination in the sale and rental of residences, a major problem at the time. Its provisions brought about many improvements—but before long, the federal government was dictating banks' and insurance companies' business decisions, forbidding agents to answer a customer's questions about subjects like a neighborhood's population mix, and even regulating the race of models used in real-estate ads.

When the Environmental Protection Agency was established in 1970, America's air was filthy, its rivers caught on fire, and its wilderness areas were rapidly being despoiled. Today the situation is much better, but instead of sticking to what it was created for, the EPA regulates shower heads and holds up vital public works for years over minor threats to endangered species. Ominously, the agency now has the power to massively reorder American life by regulating carbon dioxide as a pollutant, and it is seeking similar authority over water vapor.

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For most Americans before the 1970s, the experience of government fixes was positive: the New Deal (which, for all its failures and overreachings, was undeniably popular), civil rights, consumer protection, poverty reduction. The enabling legislation in all these cases was passed by wide bipartisan margins in response to crying needs; they all showed dramatic early results, usually at modest expense; and, inevitably, all were stretched way beyond their original limits once the easy cases had been solved.

Today's health-care fight, by contrast, takes place amid trillion-dollar deficits in a nation that's sadder but wiser about big government and is facing no particular crisis. To be sure, America's health-care system has plenty of room for improvement. But in view of what happened with these earlier laws, all of which were passed for the best of reasons, is it any wonder that so many Americans don't want an arrangement that satisfies 80 percent of the country to be turned upside down, shaken to pieces, and put back together by the friendly folks in Washington?

So what if the Democrats' health-care bill does not explicitly mention a single-payer arrangement, abortion funding, death panels, treatment for illegal aliens, or any of the other "myths" that "alarmists" are peddling? There's plenty of wiggle room, with determinations to be made by boards and committees and experts and administrators; and even where no explicit authority to regulate exists, imaginative bureaucrats and their judicial enablers will conspire to create it.

The cost, of course, will increase far beyond projections; just look at Social Security and all the other federal entitlement programs. At the same time, careerism, mission creep, idealism ripening into zealotry, and simple lust for power will combine to expand the bureaucracy's authority—only this time, its authority will be over the most important and personal details of our lives. There's never been a social reform program that stuck to what it was designed for; why will the biggest one of all be any different?

Today's voters have seen the aftermath of the programs that looked so tempting to their parents and grandparents: skyrocketing expenses, ever-expanding regulatory reach, and a Pandora's box of unintended consequences. So you can't blame Americans for being reluctant to surrender control of their money, their health, and perhaps even their lives, in hopes that the government will get it right this time. **NR**

Mr. Suburbia

What the GOP can learn from Virginia's Bob McDonnell

BY DUNCAN CURRIE

Arlington, Va.

Sheila Johnson isn't just any Virginia Democrat. Co-founder of Black Entertainment Television and part owner of three professional sports franchises, Johnson campaigned robustly for Barack Obama and, according to the *Washington Post*, has donated more than $600,000 to Virginia's Democratic governor, Tim Kaine, since 2000, "making her the governor's second-largest individual donor." Yet on July 20, the self-described "lifelong Democrat" publicly endorsed Republican gubernatorial candidate Bob McDonnell, touting his experience in the business world and lauding "the strength of his character."

Johnson made clear that her support for McDonnell, who served as Virginia attorney general from 2006 until this past February, stems from practical considerations rather than from ideology. While McDonnell, 55, is a pro-life conservative who spent 14 years representing a staunchly Republican district in the Virginia house of delegates, he has run a decidedly non-ideological campaign, tailoring his message to attract the suburban moderates who have spurned the GOP in recent statewide elections. The day after Johnson announced her endorsement, McDonnell released an ambitious 19-page transportation plan designed to mitigate the commonwealth's traffic and infrastructure woes, which are particularly severe in Northern Virginia (outside Washington, D.C.) and in the Hampton Roads area (around Virginia Beach, Norfolk, and Newport News). Whatever its flaws, McDonnell's transportation blueprint captures the essence of his gubernatorial bid: The former prosecutor has focused his campaign on the everyday concerns that animate voters in the suburbs.

"He has mastered that suburban approach," says Larry Sabato, director of the University of Virginia's Center for Politics. Indeed, McDonnell, an Army veteran and

In Memoriam

Rose D. Friedman

1911–2009

The University of Chicago Press

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former business manager of a Fortune 500 company, is casting himself as "Mr. Suburbia," says Bob Holsworth, a longtime Virginia political analyst and founder of the nonpartisan website Virginia-Tomorrow.com. The GOP candidate grew up in suburban Fairfax County (near D.C.) and later settled his family in suburban Virginia Beach. He knows full well that gubernatorial races hinge on the populous suburbs of Washington, Richmond, and Hampton Roads. In his efforts to woo suburbanites, McDonnell talks about issues such as jobs, business development, government spending, education, traffic, crime, and gang activity. In a telephone interview on August 28, he described his agenda as "practical solutions based on conservative principles." If McDonnell prevails in November, he "is really going

Bob McDonnell

to get the spotlight," says Sabato, because "Virginia is now the ultimate swing state."

Standing in his way is Democratic nominee Creigh Deeds, 51, a state senator from rural, mountainous Bath County, which borders West Virginia. (Virginia governors are limited to a single four-year term, so Kaine cannot pursue reelection.) Deeds opposed McDonnell in the 2005 attorney general's race and wound up losing by just a few hundred votes. He won the 2009 Democratic gubernatorial nomination after a late burst (fueled in part by a surprising *Washington Post* endorsement) carried him past his two rivals, former Democratic National Committee (DNC) chairman Terry McAuliffe and former Virginia state delegate Brian Moran.

The pro-gun Deeds was regarded as a less liberal alternative to McAuliffe and Moran. But now he must energize the Democratic base, especially black voters. This has been difficult, and Deeds is trailing McDonnell by a wide margin. As of August 31, the latest RealClearPolitics polling average showed McDonnell leading by 12 percentage points. A mid-August *Washington Post* survey gave McDonnell a 15-point advantage among likely voters.

A McDonnell victory would end a lengthy string of Democratic triumphs in the Old Dominion. Over the past eight years, Democrats have won two gubernatorial races, captured both of Virginia's U.S. Senate seats, and gained a majority in the state senate. From the election of Dwight Eisenhower in 1952 through the reelection of George W. Bush in 2004, Virginia went for the Republican presidential candidate all but one time (in 1964, when it backed LBJ over Goldwater). But in 2008, Obama carried the state by 6 percentage points.

On the other hand, while Virginia was always a relatively conservative state, it was never a Republican bastion—far from it. Like many ex-Confederate states, it became a Democratic stronghold following Reconstruction. After the Democrats cemented their grip on power, Virginia did not have another GOP governor until 1970, and Republicans did not control both chambers of the legislature until 2000. Since 1970, Virginia has had five Republican governors and five Democratic governors, with the party of the incumbent U.S. president losing eight consecutive gubernatorial elections starting in 1977.

"Each party has put together winning streaks," says Frank Atkinson, who served as counselor and policy director under former GOP governor George Allen and has written two books on Virginia's modern political history. At the gubernatorial level, Republicans dominated the 1970s and much of the 1990s, while Democrats won three straight elections in the 1980s and thus far have captured two straight in the new millennium. Not since 1973—when Richard Nixon was president and newly minted Republican Mills Godwin, who had governed Virginia as a Democrat from 1966 to 1970, was the GOP gubernatorial nominee—has the president's party won a governor's race.

Based on this history, we would expect a GOP victory in 2009. The challenge for Deeds has been made even more daunting by the national political environment. Whereas the "enthusiasm gap" aided Democrats in the past few election cycles, this year it is helping Republicans. "That's the fundamental dynamic in this race," says Sabato. The disproportionate enthusiasm among GOP voters reflects their opposition to the policies being promoted in Democratic Washington.

McDonnell knocks congressional Democrats for their "assault on the free-enterprise system," arguing that soaring federal spending and costly initiatives such as pro-union "card-check" legislation and the Waxman-Markey climate bill "have created angst in the suburbs." Yet while he openly criticizes Democratic leaders Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid, McDonnell seems more cautious about disparaging President Obama. In fact, during our recent interview, McDonnell went out of his way to note that he agrees with Obama about expanding charter schools and implementing merit pay for teachers.

This is savvy politics. McDonnell has no need to castigate Obama directly. The GOP base is already galvanized, so he can concentrate on voters in the center. Unlike Deeds, he did not face a primary challenger and has effectively been running a general-election campaign from the start. McDonnell enjoys solid support among conservatives, which has freed him to target moderates, who accounted for 46 percent of the Virginia electorate in 2008. (Conservatives were 33 percent and liberals 21 percent.)

As for Deeds, he is still struggling to excite urban blacks and suburban white liberals about his candidacy. Former Virginia Democratic governor Doug Wilder, America's first elected black governor, has refused to endorse Deeds, just as he refused to endorse him in the 2005 attorney general's race. Wilder is still bitter that Deeds voted against a controversial gun-control measure during his governorship in the early 1990s. (McDonnell backed that measure at the time, and in 2005 the NRA endorsed Deeds over McDonnell.)

In a somewhat desperate gambit, Deeds is now trying to link McDonnell with George W. Bush. In late August, his campaign released an ad blasting the "McDonnell-Bush approach" to economic policy, which was summarized as "tax breaks for the super-wealthy, job losses and foreclosures for the rest of us." As of July, Virginia's unemployment rate (6.9 percent) was well below the national rate (9.4 percent) but still much higher than it had been a year earlier (4 percent). Governor Kaine, who in January became the new DNC chief, has seen his popularity decline.

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His travails obviously haven't helped Deeds, who is busy plugging his "pro-business" credentials and calling himself a "Mark Warner–style" Democrat, referring to the popular former governor who won election to the U.S. Senate in 2008. Meanwhile, Deeds is assailing McDonnell's record on abortion and painting him as outside the mainstream. This is a curious ploy. As Holsworth observes, "Abortion hasn't been a big issue in Virginia campaigns since 1989." (That was three years before the Supreme Court reaffirmed *Roe* v. *Wade* in its *Casey* decision.) But Deeds apparently reckons that he can use social issues to secure his liberal base and also to frighten suburban moderates.

Deeds got fresh ammunition on August 30, when the *Washington Post* reported on the master's thesis that McDonnell completed at Regent University, an evangelical Christian school founded by Pat Robertson. In the course of explaining how Republicans could bolster traditional families, McDonnell's 1989 thesis expressed a dim view of women in the workplace, and argued that "every level of government should statutorily and procedurally prefer married couples over cohabitators, homosexuals, or fornicators." When asked about his thesis, McDonnell told the *Post* that "my views on many issues have changed as I have gotten older," adding that his discussion of working women "was simply an academic exercise and clearly does not reflect my views." (He has a working wife and two working daughters; his daughter Jeanine served with the U.S. Army in Iraq.) McDonnell insisted that he should be judged on his lengthy political career and his current campaign, "not on a decades-old academic paper I wrote as a student during the Reagan era and haven't thought about in years."

It's unclear whether the thesis story will dent McDonnell's standing in the suburbs. Holsworth says that his strength among independents is "pretty remarkable." As former Bush speechwriter Michael Gerson wrote in a recent column, McDonnell has eschewed the sort of "us against them" populism that many suburbanites find distasteful. He has not abandoned his conservative social beliefs, but he has soft-pedaled them while embracing practical policy recommendations aimed at addressing quality-of-life and cost-of-living issues. It is a smart strategy—and, with the assistance of favorable political winds, it seems to be working. NR

Blame Milton Friedman

Or, how I learned to stop worrying and love the bailout

BY KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON

At the suggestion of our editor, Rich Lowry, I've been reviewing some correspondence leading up to National Review's endorsement of what became known as the Troubled Asset Relief Program, TARP. I was energetically opposed to our endorsement of that action and, upon reviewing my notes from the debate, it strikes me that I may even have been intemperate in my rhetoric. I trust Mr. Lowry will have forgotten my references to his "diseased mental siftings" and my sneering at "the panicked rantings of country-club Republicans in Greenwich, Conn." In retrospect, that seems a bit much. I was happy that he shared my skepticism on the subject of bailouts for the automotive industry, TARP II, and other federal interventions.

Those who endorsed National Review's line on TARP may be pleased to know that I have been rethinking my position. There are those conservatives who ask themselves, "What would Jesus do?" There are those who ask, "What would Ronald Reagan do?" There are even a few who ask, "What would Russell Kirk do, other than pour himself a scotch and shake his head sadly before writing another 1,000 pages?" I ask myself, "What would Milton Friedman do?"

Milton Friedman would have supported a bank bailout.

Or it seems he would have, given that a bank bailout is more or less what he prescribed for the last great financial crisis, the one leading up to the Great Depression, which he dwells upon at some length in his *Monetary History of the United States, 1867–1960*. The vulgarized version of Friedman: The Federal Reserve helped turn a routine if severe recession into the Great Depression by tightening the supply of money and credit. But as economists as different as Paul Krugman and Tyler Cowen have pointed out, the more accurate version is this: The Fed helped cause the Great Depression *by allowing* the supply of money and credit to tighten. The distinction is important. How did they allow it? By declining to bail out the failing banks.

As Professor Krugman points out in his essay "Who Was Milton Friedman?" what evaporated in the early years of the Depression was not the monetary base, which consists of all the currency in circulation plus bank *reserves*, but the money supply, which is equal to all the currency in circulation plus bank *deposits*. It wasn't currency that disappeared from 1929 to 1933, but bank deposits. Why? Because the banks went kaplooey and the Fed did nothing to stem the tide of bank failures. And so a banking bailout is implicit in Friedman's criticism of the Fed's Depression-era policy. Friedman and his co-author, Anna J. Schwartz, approvingly invoke the *Lombard Street* rules of Walter Bagehot, the patron saint of central bankers, which hold that in times of crisis the central bank ought to support the banking system: "Lend freely, at penal rates, against good collateral." It is difficult to imagine how, in Friedman's view, the Fed could have intervened to prevent the Great Depression without executing something equivalent to a bank bailout. A bailout in the form of free lending is not so different from a bailout in the form of capital investment or soaking up "distressed" assets. None is a synonym for "Let the markets work."

Along with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. and other institutions of that kidney, the Fed's existence is an implicit judgment that bankruptcy law and normal market processes are insufficient in the case of banks. That may be a faulty judgment, but it is a very longstanding one, and it is owed some consideration. Friedman argues that the creation of the Fed preempted a repeat of the private-sector bailouts of the sort organized by J. P. Morgan during the Panic of 1907. By the time of the Depression, the big banks that were Fed members had its support and felt no need to intervene in the affairs of their weaker competitors. The Fed was created, in many ways, to allow the government to do what J. P. Morgan had done in 1907, since J. P. Morgan would not always be around to put his and his friends' personal fortunes behind the banks.

For obvious reasons, this all was very much on the mind of Ben Bernanke, who,

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You deserve a factual look at . . .

Mr. Netanyahu's Offer (II)

Are the objections of the Palestinians justified?

In our previous *hasbarah message* (#117, **"Mr. Netanyahu's Offer [I]"**), we told of the Netanyahu's government's willingness to allow a Palestinian state to arise alongside Israel in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and in Gaza. Not surprisingly, he attached certain conditions to this offer, all of which the Palestinians totally rejected. The objections that we discussed previously referred to the "settlements," the demilitarization of the new state, and the "return of the refugees."

What are the facts?

In addition to those conditions mentioned above, Mr. Netanyahu's offer of a state for the Palestinians in the "West Bank" and in Gaza included two further requirements: One, that Jerusalem remain the undivided capital of Israel and two, that the Arabs recognize Israel to be the Jewish state.

An Undivided Jerusalem. Before the end of the 1967 Six-Day War, during which the Israel defense forces reconquered Jerusalem from the Jordanians, claims to Jerusalem being a Muslim city were rarely if ever asserted. Jerusalem had always been a city in which many religions and nationalities lived side-by-side. It was only after the old city was back in Jewish hands that the Muslim Arabs declared their desire to wage "jihad" (holy war) to bring the city into Arab possession.

> "Here is another chance for the Palestinians to have their own country... Chances are overwhelming that, once again, they will reject the outstretched hand...."

The notion to call Jerusalem an Islamic holy city has only come about in modern times, especially after the Arabs lost the city to Israel in the Six-Day War. It has now gained currency by dint of constant repetition. Basis of the claim is that Jerusalem does indeed contain an Islamic holy site, the Temple Mount, sacred to both Muslims and Jews. But Jerusalem has for centuries been the capital of the Jewish people and has been the capital of Israel since its founding. It is mentioned hundreds of times in the Bible. There is not a single mention of it in the Koran.

Israel is the State of the Jews. Mr. Netanyahu insists that Israel be recognized as the Jewish state. But such recognition is obviously only a formality. Israel was established as the Jewish state by the Balfour Declaration, by the League of Nations, by the United Nations, by the consensus of the world, and by the facts on the ground. The reason that the Muslims do not wish to recognize Israel as a Jewish state is that it would supposedly prejudice the rights of the Muslims and perhaps members of other religions who live in Israel. But that is nonsense. Regardless of what it is called, everybody understands that Israel is indeed the State of the Jews, and so do the over 1 million (approximately 20% of Israel's population) Muslims that live in Israel as full citizens, with all the rights and privileges of their Jewish fellow citizens. Nobody seems to object that, for instance, Iran designates itself as an "Islamic Republic." For the Muslim world to recognize Israel as the State of the Jews would simply be recognizing reality.

It has to be clear to every student of modern history that the Palestinians, if that were their real goal, could have had their own state since at least 1937, following the Peel Report. There have been many opportunities since. The most important of those was the 1948 decision of the United Nations to partition the country west of the Jordan River into a Muslim and a Jewish state. The Jews eagerly accepted the proposal, which the Arabs utterly rejected and instead invaded the nascent state of Israel with the armies of five of their countries. There have been many other opportunities since, all of which the Muslims have rejected. One must come to the unhappy conclusion that to create a state is not the ultimate goal of the Palestinians. The ultimate goal always has been and continues to be the destruction of the state of Israel.

Mr. Netanyahu's offer of allowing a Palestinian state to be created and to exist along Israel is a most generous offer. No parallel can be found in the annals of world history. It is abundantly clear that the "conditions" accompanying Mr. Netanyahu's offer are more than reasonable. Surely, after decades of open hostilities and the recent bitter example of Gaza, it should go without saying that the newly formed state should be totally and reliably demilitarized. It should be clear that the "settlements" – about 300,000 Jews in a sea of over 3 million Arabs – cannot be an obstacle to peace, since the over 1 million Arabs living in Israel are not considered a problem. It should be clear that the "refugees," which have swelled from the original 650,000 to allegedly more than 5 million, should be settled in the newly to be formed state of Palestine.

Jerusalem has been the center of Jewish life and Jewish yearning for over 3,000 years. There is no reason why it should not remain the undivided capital of Israel. And, of course, Israel is a Jewish state. Everybody understands that, whether the Muslims do or do not wish to accept it. Here is another chance for the Palestinians to have their own country and to live in peace and in prosperity alongside Israel. But chances are overwhelming that, once again, they will reject the outstretched hand that is being offered.

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just before his elevation as chairman of the Fed, gave a speech on Friedman, banks, and the Great Depression:

> The Fed could have been more aggressive in lending cash to banks (taking their loans and other investments as collateral), or it could have simply put more cash in circulation. Either action would have made it easier for banks to obtain the cash necessary to pay off depositors, which might have stopped bank runs before they resulted in bank closings and failures. Indeed, a central element of the Federal Reserve's original mission had been to provide just this type of assistance to the banking system. . . . Moreover, most of the failing banks were relatively small and not members of the Federal Reserve System, making their fate of less interest to the policymakers. In the end, Fed officials decided not to intervene in the banking crisis, contributing once again to the precipitous fall in the money supply.

Free-marketeers tend to think of our orientation not only as an economic position but also as a virtue. (It is.) But there is a danger in letting that belief congeal into dogma and, in consequence, allowing abstractions to obscure realities. It is true that the root evil here was government intervention in the economy: The Fed's over-loose money after Dot-Bomb and 9/11, combined with tax incentives and the market-distorting actions of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, helped create the housing bubble; various government policies then helped turn that bubble into a global disaster. The subprime meltdown was not a failure of what is so often mischaracterized as "unbridled capitalism." It was as much a failure of regulatory excess as of Scrooge McDuck, literally-rolling-in-it excess.

But it is not necessarily wise to start practicing austerities at the moment of crisis. Those who opposed the bailouts were, I think, seeking to restore the virtues of the free market—at precisely the wrong time. It is as though we had been diagnosed with lung cancer and responded merely by swearing off cigarettes. *What about radiation therapy?* What, are you crazy? Radiation gives you cancer! And people get sick in hospitals!

I suspect that many of us who opposed the bailouts did so based on unjustified optimism. Surely, we thought, the citizens of this commercial republic will have learned their lesson and will hasten to enact reforms that are consistent with their experience and liberal values. Those of us who believed that must somehow have missed the contemporaneous ascent of Barack Obama, whose election as president does not suggest that the nation is ready for a heaping helping of Adam Smith. Professor Cowen demands:

> If you are a libertarian, is not our current course more favorable for liberty than would have been a repeat of 1929–1931? If not, I would be curious to hear your counterfactual version of how matters would have proceeded, without the financial bailouts. Is it that you think the regional banks would have raised the financing to pick up the entire bag and keep the banking system afloat? Or is it that natural market forces would have somehow avoided a wrenching surprise deflation? Or do you think the authorities for some reason would have not nationalized the major banks? . . . If we had not done the bailouts we did, we would, within a few months' or weeks' time, have received a much worse and costlier bailout run by Congress and Nancy Pelosi. How does that sound?

Sounds like hell on earth, professor.

I did not and do not believe that the crisis was such that organized usury was going to go the way of the brachytrachelopan. Anything ancient enough to have Old Testament strictures against it is going to be with mankind forever. But with a more radical and unmitigated crisis—one that saw the electorate sucker-punched by a few million bounced paychecks, for instance—the populist reaction probably would have been more vigorous than the one we experienced. Barack Obama was not the product of a bull market. Neither was Hugo Chávez.

The Best of All Possible Worlds is not on the menu, and we have only to choose from penny worlds, each defective in its own way. The ideologue in me says: We ought to live in a country in which a solution to the crisis that is consistent with the best of our values had a chance of being enacted. But we don't. Likewise, those who supported the bailout must surely believe that we ought to live in a country in which the damage it is going to do will be minimized, in which it is temporary, and in which we will act with all deliberate speed to undo those federal incursions into the economy—a world in which the ratchet of statism turns both ways. Good luck with that. **NR**

A Dose of Reality

Don't believe Joe Biden about the swine flu—or anything else

BY MARK HEMINGWAY

It's not every day you open up the newspaper, read that the administration's science advisers have issued a report warning that 90,000 people may perish in an impending epidemic—and then breathe a sigh of relief. The sigh was possible because the Centers for Disease Control had cleaned up after the White House, explaining that the report's eye-popping figure was "not a prediction," merely a planning scenario. But by the time the CDC had set the record straight, hundreds of news stories had already publicized the sensational claim.

The report came from the same administration whose vice president terrified the public by suggesting that Americans avoid confined spaces, airplanes, and public transportation because of swine flu, and later mused about shuttering the nation's schools. Clearly, this White House should not be your go-to source for epidemiological information.

But the knowledge that the White House report was bunk was not the only reason for my relief. It happened that I had just endured the swine flu and could take some solace in the fact that, thanks to my ordeal, the rest of my family was much less likely to catch this particular plague. My experience leaves me duty-bound to deliver a simple message to America: Don't panic—please. And never, ever, ever listen to Joe Biden.

My flu came on out of nowhere one weekend. I felt unnaturally sluggish but plunged ahead with work and family the best I could. On Tuesday evening I settled in to watch the president's prime-time press conference on health care. Suddenly I began to feel cold—and it wasn't just Obama's performance. I grabbed a down comforter and lay down on the couch, a most unusual thing to do in July in Washington, D.C., when the hum of the struggling air conditioner sounds like a small voice repeating, "I think I can, I think I can." Unless you were on the Shackleton

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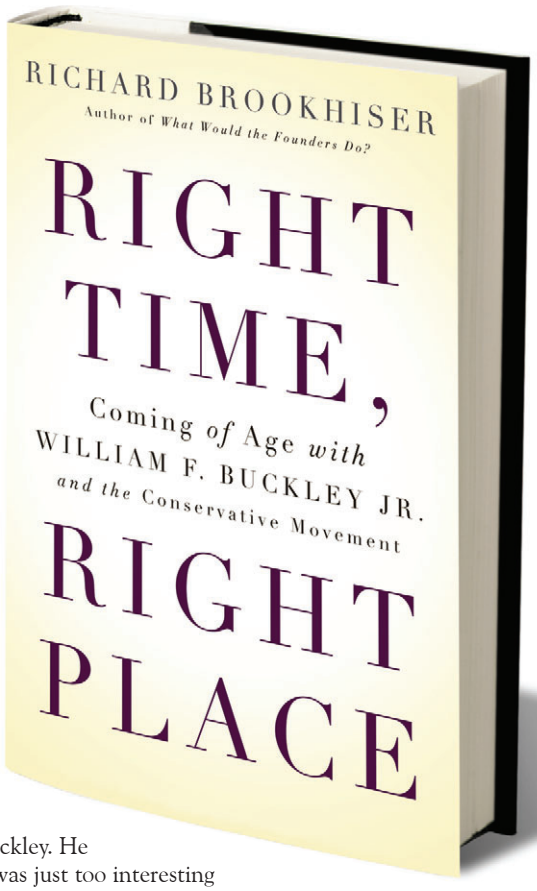
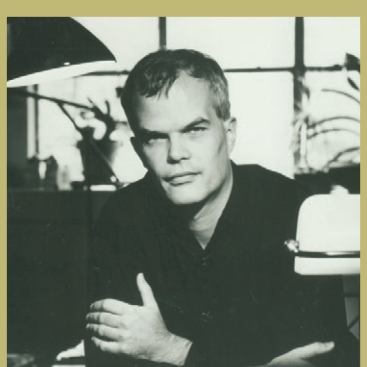


Publishers Weekly: In 1969, the precocious 14-year-old Brookhiser wrote a cover story for *National Review* and began to correspond with founding editor William F. Buckley Jr., who serves as both hero and, sometimes, villain of this wistful memoir. After graduating from Yale, the author became Buckley's designated successor, his rapid ascendancy mirroring the prodigious gains of the conservative movement as championed by the magazine and led by Ronald Reagan. The book, like the author's life, takes an abrupt turn when the mercurial Buckley writes him a letter to say that he no longer considers Brookhiser an appropriate candidate to succeed him. . . . The author deftly sets his personal and professional biography in a sharply observed historical and intellectual context, while sharing his deep affection for—and occasional resentment of—Buckley with compelling candor.

Kirkus Reviews: Brookhiser's adolescence coincided perfectly with that of the magazine—in 1970, at the remarkable age of 14, he published his first article there. The author arrived early enough on the *NR* scene to absorb the in-house lore surrounding the likes of Whittaker Chambers, James Burnham, Russell Kirk, Garry Wills and other contributors. Rising quickly from summer intern to writer, managing editor and, at 23, senior editor, Brookhiser was tapped to succeed Buckley as editor-in-chief. The author was stunned to have the offer unexpectedly withdrawn a few years later. Baffled and resentful, he embarked on a new career as a freelancer and historian, never severing his ties to the magazine or to Buckley. He enjoyed the steady paycheck, of course, but as this memoir makes clear, life at *NR* was just too interesting and too much fun. Brookhiser's wonderfully conversational, occasionally confessional, frequently witty account contains numerous stories about the magazine's daily operations and its rise from the political margins to the white-hot center of the Reagan Revolution. Sprinkled throughout are amusing snapshots of the startling array of talent—Paul Gigot, George Will and Terry Teachout, among many others—who passed through its doors. More than anything, though, Brookhiser reflects on his maturation as a thinker, writer and a man who for too long measured his worth against the glittering Buckley, his spiritual father, inspiration, boss and friend. Old enough now to appreciate the misunderstandings on both sides, chastened by a bout with cancer and distinguished in his own right as a historian, Brookhiser's eyes-wide-open appraisal of his mentor is deeply affectionate. Right book, right author.



***Right Time, Right Place: Coming of Age with William F. Buckley Jr. and the Conservative Movement* is available direct from *National Review*, for only $27.95, which includes shipping and handling.**

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expedition, don't bother trying to understand how cold I felt that evening. This feeling was promptly followed by shivering, and by "shivering" I mean that my whole body shook like that machine in the back of the hardware store that mixes paint. I drifted in and out of consciousness as the president droned on. (I had the worst fever dream: The federal government was trying to exert control over 17 percent of the economy.)

Finally I stopped shaking and summoned the will to heave the comforter off me in one mighty effort. My wife, seeing me stir, bustled over to the couch. She applied the back of her hand to my forehead, then retrieved a digital thermometer from the medicine cabinet to confirm what I had already read on her face—my temperature was just shy of 103 degrees. After I took a cold shower the fever broke and I made several dismissive comments about my condition, all of which failed to uncock my wife's skeptical eyebrow. I went to bed around midnight, and a few hours later my wife awoke to find her semi-somnambulant husband looming over her side of the bed, demanding more blankets. The chills had returned and, soon, so had the fever.

At this point it was clear my attempts at manly stoicism were failing to impress my wife. I soon found myself in an immediate-care clinic. The doctor listened to my tale of woe and performed a throat swab and a battery of other tests. My blood pressure and pulse were worryingly low, while my breathing rate was high.

"In my clinical diagnosis," said the doc, "you have Influenza A." So I had the flu. No big deal, right? "And I don't want to alarm you, but you have the flu in July. It's not flu season." My slowly beating heart fluttered a bit with anticipation. "Nearly all of the cases of flu we are seeing right now are swine flu."

Prior to my diagnosis, I had thought that swine flu was yet another overhyped media scare, like SARS, avian flu, flesh-eating bacteria, and the demise of Jon and Kate Gosselin's marriage. For a moment, I thought I'd won the pathological lottery. But it turns out that swine flu is just another form of the same flu we all survive every winter. It is already much more common than people realize, and not so dangerous as we've been led to believe. The good news is that, while swine flu is real and spreading, it isn't especially threatening to otherwise healthy adults. Symptoms typically last a week. (Mine lasted a bit longer.)

The bad news is that there's no real treatment for it, and the really bad news is that swine flu is much more contagious than the typical variety. "Do you live alone?" the doc asked. I told her I had a wife and two kids. She asked how old my children were. "The youngest is two months"—her eyes got *very* wide—"and the other is almost two."

"Do you have relatives you could stay with?" she asked. That wasn't an option. She looked concerned but told me I could go home—provided I didn't sleep in the same bed as my wife, steered clear of my kids, and generally avoided everybody. She contributed further to my worry by informing me that the flu is most contagious just before symptoms manifest themselves—I'd been contagious for days. If anyone else in my family, especially the baby, appeared to be even remotely sick, I was to get him to a doctor immediately.

I should at this point make a confession: I cannot say for certain that I had the swine flu. The doctor told me that I wasn't sick enough to justify a trip to the hospital for the tests that would confirm her diagnosis. The disease has become commonplace enough that it no longer warrants the extra attention. The day after my diagnosis, I read that both the *Washington Post* and *National Geographic* had sent out memos informing staff that employees had contracted swine flu. Our neighborhood e-mail list reported that people living nearby were afflicted. But I didn't dismiss the doctor's warnings.

And so began my exile. The "spare bedroom" in our house is a glorified storage closet, and curling up my weakened, six-foot-five-inch frame on our salvaged trundle bed while my wife sprawled across our new W Hotels Queen-Size Plush-Top Mattress hardly seemed fair. But far worse than the illness was not having any contact with my wife or children for the next week. During that time, I had very little energy, though ibuprofen helped with the fever and I had only one more bout of chills. I slept a lot and read quite a few cheap paperbacks. Eventually, I got better. More important, my wife and kids stayed healthy.

Meanwhile, outside my tiny quarantine ward, word got around that I had the swine flu. Fast. Most people were oddly incredulous. A friend on Twitter put it distinctively: "Someone I know has The Oink? For reals?" I received several frantic phone calls from people expressing grave concern about my health. I had to patiently explain many times over that, yes, I had swine flu, but, no, it was not a serious threat to my health. For all the media attention, the persistent ignorance about swine flu is astounding.

After I posted a short note about my affliction on National Review Online that explained some of the basics of swine flu, e-mails thanking me poured in. Almost all were from people who had contracted the disease. The most memorable was from a mother whose young twins had been infected; in response, her co-workers had said several mean things and avoided her like—what else?—the plague, even long after there was no further cause for concern about contagion.

For all the media attention, the persistent ignorance about swine flu is astounding.

It is increasingly likely that swine flu will affect you or somebody you know. The best tactic is commonsense prevention: Wash your hands, stay home if you're feeling sick, and, above all, don't put off seeing a doctor. The flu is a common affliction and it's nothing to fear, but in rare cases it develops into something very serious. Regular old influenza kills thousands around the world every year and has been doing so since long before swine flu arrived on the scene.

That said, it's been more than a month and people still come up to me as if I'd survived a trip down Niagara Falls in a barrel. It's pretty obvious that Chicken Little warnings from the media and the government aren't helping. My hope is that, once the public gets a handle on swine flu, the White House science advisers will be able to spend their time more productively. Maybe they can start by issuing a report on whatever's wrong with Joe Biden. **NR**

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A Myth Is as Good as a Mile

Why the assisted-suicide movement is winning

BY WESLEY J. SMITH

THE assisted-suicide movement has come a long way in just a couple of decades. Consider, for example, this recent item from the *San Francisco Chronicle*: "Charlotte Shultz [the wife of former secretary of state George Shultz] accepted the invitation to be honorary co-chair (with Dianne Feinstein) at a Nov. 5 luncheon and program for Compassion & Choices of Northern California, saying, 'I'm glad to support the cause, but I'm in no hurry to use the services.'" Compassion & Choices used to be called the Hemlock Society. It is the nation's premier assisted-suicide advocacy group.

When members of the social and political elite—people like Senator Feinstein and Mrs. Shultz—associate themselves with assisted-suicide groups as openly as they would with charities like the United Way, we have reached a new cultural moment. Assisted-suicide advocates once mostly inhabited the kook fringe. Groups like the old Hemlock Society published how-to-commit-suicide newsletters and promoted wacko suicide paraphernalia like the "Exit Bag" (which had Velcro straps sewn in to ensure "a comfortable fit"). The movement's public face was the ghoulish Jack Kevorkian. Promoters of assisted suicide were both short on cash and lacking in respectability.

Mr. Smith is a Senior Fellow in Human Rights and Bioethics at the Discovery Institute and a consultant for the International Task Force on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide. His Culture of Death *(2001) received the Independent Publisher Book Award for best health book of the year.*

Not that the old guard has entirely disappeared. Derek Humphry, Hemlock's founder, runs an entity called NuTech that researches and promotes various methods of suicide. He's also on the advisory board of the Final Exit Network, which counsels "hopelessly ill" people on ending their lives with helium and plastic bags. (Several FEN members were recently arrested for this activity.) Kevorkian is out of prison and on the lecture circuit, making as much as $50,000 per speech.

But he is no longer the face of assisted suicide. Today, the most important assisted-suicide advocates tend to be affluent and well-tailored liberal women who travel the country pitching "aid in dying" to elite society and the mainstream media. They and their groups are well funded, by organizations such as the leftist Tides Foundation. (Compassion & Choices operates with a seven-figure annual budget.)

Changing the movement's image has made a difference in its results. Three states have legalized assisted suicide—Oregon and Washington by voter referendum, and Montana by a court ruling. States from Hawaii to Vermont have experienced protracted legislative battles over the issue, the tide in favor of assisted suicide rising incrementally with each failed attempt.

These advances would not have happened but for a powerful myth promoted by assisted-suicide advocates and helped along by a compliant media: the notion that Oregon's experiment with legalized assisted suicide has been a success, in which problems and abuses are rare or nonexistent. It is true that the annual statistical

DARREN GYGI

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reports published by the Public Health Division (henceforth OPHD) of Oregon's Department of Human Services have revealed very few problems. But there's a reason for that: The reporting system was designed by the authors of the assisted-suicide legislation to be incapable of vigorous policing and in-depth data gathering.

As a result, nobody knows precisely what is going on in Oregon. The data in the state-published reports are based overwhelmingly on self-reporting by death-prescribing doctors—who are as likely to admit violating the law on this matter as they are to tell the IRS that they have cheated on their taxes. Indeed, as the bureaucrats charged with publishing the annual report admitted to an investigative committee from the British House of Lords, the OPHD engages in only very limited and random checking of the information it receives. Moreover, the department has no budget or authority to investigate apparent violations of the law, and all documentation relied upon in writing the annual report is destroyed once the report has been published. Dr. Kathleen Foley, perhaps the nation's premier palliative-care doctor, and suicide-prevention expert Dr. Herbert Hendin wrote in the *Michigan Law Review* last year that the OPHD "does not collect the information it would need to effectively monitor the law and in its actions and publications acts as the defender of the law rather than as the protector of the welfare of terminally ill patients."

These official data, therefore, are not very helpful to anyone looking for the truth. But other studies have indicated serious abuses. One, published in the *Journal of Internal Medicine* in 2008, found that doctors in Oregon routinely write lethal prescriptions for patients who are not experiencing significant symptoms. Further, people who request lethal prescriptions rarely do so because of pain, but rather as a result of existential fears, such as worries about being burdens or losing their dignity. In other words, the actual practice of hastening death has very little to do with any inability of doctors to alleviate pain.

Depression is, of course, a frequent end-of-life issue. In Oregon, doctors are not prevented from assisting the suicides of people who are depressed unless the condition has caused "impaired judgment." That's often hard to determine without an in-depth mental-health examination. Yet Oregon physicians who assist suicides rarely refer their suicidal patients for mental-health consultations: They referred none in 2007 and only two last year. And even those who are referred may receive only a cursory review. Foley and Hendin detailed one such consultation for a patient named Joan, who had Lou Gehrig's disease:

> The doctor and the family found a cooperative psychologist who asked Joan to take the Minnesota Multiphasic Inventory, a standard psychological test. Because it was difficult for Joan to travel to the psychologist's office, her children read the true-false questions to her at home. The family found the questions funny, and Joan's daughter described the family as "cracking up" over them. Based on these test results, the psychologist concluded that whatever depression Joan had was directly related to her terminal illness, which he considered a completely normal response. . . . The psychologist's report in Joan's case is particularly disturbing because without taking the trouble to see her, and on the basis of a single questionnaire administered by her family, he was willing to give an opinion that would facilitate ending Joan's life.

How many other such cases are there? No one knows, and there is no evidence that bureaucrats at the OPHD very much care.

Then there are the well-documented cases of Barbara Wagner and Randy Stroup. Both had recurrent cancer while on Oregon's Medicaid, a program in which there is explicit rationing. Their doctors prescribed chemotherapy to extend their lives. But—in a decision relevant to our current health-care-reform debate—state bureaucrats refused to cover their treatments because the medical literature indicated that neither could be expected to survive for five years with the prescribed drugs. Instead, they offered Wagner and Stroup funding for their assisted suicides.

The abuse had to rise to this extremely high level of official callousness for the media to start paying any attention. The lack of meaningful state oversight is generally unknown to the public. As a result, the Oregon Myth has become assisted-suicide advocates' most potent argument in spreading "death with dignity" laws throughout the nation.

DESPITE the myth's widespread currency, from 1997 until 2008 assisted-suicide advocates made no legal headway in the rest of the country. Frustrated advocates adopted a strategy they called "Oregon plus one," believing that if just one more state legalized assisted suicide the agenda would sweep the nation. Last year, that one state fell into their laps—owing primarily to former Washington governor Booth Gardner, a popular and wealthy ex-politician with Parkinson's disease who decided to make assisted-suicide legalization his "last campaign." When he thundered, "My life! My death! My control!" and put hundreds of thousands of his own dollars into the campaign, the media swooned. It didn't take long for virtually every major Washington State newspaper—citing Oregon's example as justification—to support the assisted-suicide measure known as I-1000.

The campaign over I-1000 was never much of a fight. Understanding the importance of Washington to their cause worldwide—the euthanasia movement is international in scope—assisted-suicide advocates across the country poured money into the yes campaign. The opposition withered financially. In the end, it was a rout, $4 million to $1 million. I-1000 passed by 58 percent to 42 percent, and the assisted-suicide movement again had the wind in its sails.

Shortly after Washington's vote, Montana gave the movement another boost. On Dec. 5, 2008, district judge Dorothy McCarter ruled in *Baxter* v. *Montana* that the state law banning assisted suicide violates the right to privacy guaranteed in the Montana constitution, as well as that document's declaration that "the dignity of the human being is inviolable." McCarter found therein a "fundamental right" for the terminally ill to "die with dignity": perhaps the first time an advocacy slogan became the basis for a constitutional right. McCarter also ruled that doctors have a concomitant right to be free from "liability under the State's homicide statutes" if they assist a patient's suicide.

That case is currently on appeal in the Montana supreme court, but because McCarter refused a requested stay of her ruling pending appeal, assisted suicide is currently a constitutional right in the state of Montana. And given the very broad language of the decision, there seems little doubt that its reasoning could open the door to assisted suicide to people who are not terminally ill. (As of this writing, and to the publicly expressed consternation of assisted-suicide advocates, no Montanan is known to have exercised his or her right to die, because doctors there have been unwilling to commit "death with dignity." Doctors in Washington have been similarly reluctant.)

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Even as they were pushing explicit assisted-suicide legalization in Washington and Montana, advocates opened a second front in their quest to legalize death-hastening acts by doctors. Two members of the California assembly with close ties to Compassion & Choices had twice unsuccessfully attempted to legalize assisted suicide in the Golden State. Thwarted in that effort, they introduced Assembly Bill 2747, a bill they said required doctors only to inform their terminally ill patients about their end-of-life options. In actuality, as first proposed, the legislation would have permitted euthanasia by the back door.

Here's how: The bill would have transformed a legitimate but rarely required pain-control technique known as "palliative sedation" from its legitimate use—putting a patient who is near death, and whose suffering cannot otherwise be controlled, into an induced coma—into a method of intentionally causing death, by, in the words of the bill, "making the patient unaware and unconscious, while artificial food and hydration are withheld, during the progression of the disease leading to the death of the patient." It would have allowed a dying patient with months left to demand that his doctor sedate and dehydrate him to death—regardless of whether sedation was actually needed to control pain and suffering. And, again quoting the bill, if a doctor didn't "wish to comply with his or her patient's choice of end-of-life options," the doctor would be required to "refer or transfer [the] patient to an alternative health care provider" who would do the deed.

These provisions were ultimately gutted from AB 2747. But it is worth noting that the law requires physicians to provide information about all options—ranging from hospice to palliative sedation (properly defined)—to terminally ill patients, or to refer them to expert organizations—such as Compassion & Choices—capable of counseling them on these options. This may seem innocuous. It isn't: The walkback of AB 2747 marked the beginning of an attempt by Compassion & Choices to change its public image from that of a zealous assisted-suicide advocacy organization to that of a supposedly dispassionate patient-education group.

It's no coincidence that a similar provision popped up in the notorious Section 1233 of H.R. 3200, the House version of Obamacare. As part of their compensated end-of-life counseling for Medicare recipients, physicians and nurses could refer patients to expert outside groups. And guess which organization claims credit for playing a prominent part in creating Section 1233? From the Compassion & Choices website, on July 27, 2009: "Compassion & Choices and its supporters have worked tirelessly with supportive members of congress [*sic*] to include in proposed reform legislation a provision requiring Medicare to cover patient consultation with their doctors about end-of-life choice (section 1233 of House Bill 3200)."

Given its involvement in AB 2747 and Section 1233, Compassion & Choices clearly wants to become the Planned Parenthood of assisted suicide, no doubt hoping one day to receive public funds and medical referrals for end-of-life counseling, and, where legal, to facilitate assisted suicide. (It has already done the latter in Oregon.)

Two thousand and eight was a banner year for the assisted-suicide/euthanasia movement. It's likely that no new states will legalize assisted suicide this year. But if the last 20 years prove anything, it is that euthanasia advocates are passionately committed, work hard, and feel that time is on their side. Are their opponents equally committed? **NR**

Getting to the Truth

Newly declassified documents show that the Bush administration's interrogation policies were both responsible and effective

BY RICHARD LOWRY

PRIOR to the release of every newly declassified document related to the CIA interrogation program, some horrifying detail is previewed in the press. In April, Mark Danner wrote an account in the *New York Review of Books* of interviews that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had conducted with high-value detainees. According to the ICRC, top detainee Abu Zubaydah told how his interrogators had used a plastic collar to slam him "directly against a hard concrete wall." Danner dwells on the plastic collar as a ghoulish instrument, on par with rubber poles the Soviets used to beat political prisoners.

Then Bush-administration legal memos detailing the methods were released. An Aug. 1, 2002, memo discussed the "walling" of Abu Zubaydah. He'd be pushed against "a flexible false wall" with only his shoulder blades hitting the wall and with a collar around his neck—"to help prevent whiplash." Part of the point of the exercise was to create a startling, loud crashing sound, "a sound that will make the impact seem far worse than it is and that will be far worse than any injury that might result from the action." This context creates an altogether different impression from that given by the account of Zubaydah's being thrown against a concrete wall, willy-nilly.

Before the release of the 2004 CIA inspector-general report in late August, two of the outlandish details hyped in the press were reports of a threat by an interrogator to rape a detainee's family members and of mock executions staged to convince detainees that other detainees had been killed. Both would strike most people as out of bounds and both could, depending on the exact circumstances, constitute torture.

But when the IG report was released, again, the context put the incidents in a different light. One CIA officer, according to the report, threatened the mastermind of the USS *Cole* bombing, Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, by telling him that if he didn't cooperate "we could bring your mother in here" and "we can bring your family in here." Another person present thought the officer hoped his Arabic dialect would lead al-Nashiri to think he was in the custody of a Middle Eastern country where—horrifically—prisoners are routinely interrogated by sexually abusing their female relatives in front of them. The officer denied it and told the IG he never told al-Nashiri who he was or where he was from, letting him draw his own conclusions. Perhaps even this was too much, but the report relayed the element of ambiguity in the event.

On the mock executions, the IG report says that, after one, a

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detainee who witnessed a fake body reportedly "sang like a bird." But it discusses other mock executions that were "transparently a ruse" and utterly ineffective. Even attempting such a thing was a mistake—the method was not specifically authorized and wasn't repeated once the CIA got a better handle on the program. But a mock execution that doesn't scare anyone because it's so obviously false hardly constitutes a mock execution.

So it is that every interrogation document slated for release is about to deliver a devastating blow to Bush-era criminality—but the blow never quite comes. Indeed, the documents—especially the latest batch from the CIA—have buttressed the case for Bush's interrogation program and undermined the critics.

The opponents say the program was lawless and ineffectual. The documents suggest the opposite on both counts. The CIA was obsessed with getting legal clearance from the Department of Justice, and Justice closely parsed just about everything the CIA did. If the legal reasoning is open to dispute in various instances, there should be no doubt that the Bush administration sincerely grappled with what it could do under the law to protect the country in the aftermath of 9/11. As far as efficacy is concerned, the IG report and the two other just-released CIA reports explain how the interrogations produced a remarkable trove of intelligence. The program revealed ongoing plots and made possible the capture of operatives around the world and in the U.S. Without it, the chances of an attack in the U.S. would have been much higher.

THE program originated in the exigencies of 9/11. Bin Laden's lieutenant Abu Zubaydah was our first high-level detainee. Shot while being captured in March 2002, he was given medical treatment, and his questioning was delayed for several weeks while he recovered. When we started interrogating him with "non-aggressive, non-physical elicitation techniques," in the words of the IG report, he was thought to be holding out. But he "presented the Agency with the opportunity to obtain actionable intelligence on future threats to the United States from the most senior al Qaeda member in U.S. custody at that time." What to do?

The critics of the interrogation program presumably would have let it go and just hoped that Abu Zubaydah would eventually tell us what we needed to know. Perhaps he would have. The prospect of indefinite detention, or patient relationship-building on the part of an interrogator, might have persuaded him to talk over time. Except how were we supposed to know how much time we had before another attack?

Thus the enhanced-interrogation techniques (EITs) were born. The CIA wanted to ascertain that the techniques it was contemplating caused no long-term psychological harm. It consulted the Department of Defense, where harsh techniques were used in the Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) training program. The Department of Defense "concluded no long-term psychological effects resulted from use of the EITs, including the most taxing technique, the waterboard, on SERE students," according to the IG report. The CIA also sought guidance from the Department of Justice on what was legal.

Ten practices were adopted, from the relatively innocuous "attention grab" (the interrogator grasps the detainee and thrusts him forward) and "facial hold" (holding the detainee's head) to the much harsher methods of sleep deprivation and waterboarding. The CIA wanted to walk up to, but not cross, the line of "severe pain or suffering" that constitutes torture. This is inherently a fraught exercise. It will involve making close legal distinctions and using practices that in another context—e.g., dealing with lawful prisoners of war—would clearly be abusive. But as the IG report puts it flatly, "the Agency was under pressure to do everything possible to prevent additional terrorist attacks."

The CIA wanted to do the task assigned to it—get intelligence to foil ongoing plots—without running afoul of its minders. It was the very opposite of a rogue agency. "In early 2003, CIA officials, at the urging of the General Counsel, continued to inform senior Administration officials and the leadership of the Congressional Oversight Committees of the then-current status of the CTC Program," the IG report says. "The Agency specifically wanted to ensure that these officials and the Committees continued to be aware and approve of CIA's actions."

And the interrogation process—although looser than it should have been at the beginning—was tightly controlled. "Headquarters must approve the use of each specific EIT in advance," the IG report explained. "EITs may be employed only by trained and certified interrogators for use with a specific detainee and with appropriate medical and psychological monitoring of the process."

Details mattered. Consider "water dousing." The IG report explains that "dousing involves laying a detainee down on a plastic sheet and pouring water over him for 10 to 15 minutes. Another officer explained that the room was maintained at 70 degrees or more; the guards used water that was at room temperature while the interrogator questioned the detainee." One interrogator sought permission from headquarters to douse detainees. The return cable, says the IG report, "directed that the detainee must be placed on a towel or sheet, may not be placed naked on the bare cement floor, and the air temperature must exceed 65 degrees if the detainee will not be dried immediately."

Even a *New York Times* news report noticed that the impression of the documents "is by no means one of gung-ho operatives running wild. It is a portrait of overwhelming control exercised from C.I.A. headquarters and the Department of Justice." The smallest deviation was frowned upon. An officer admitted in the IG report that he and a colleague had blown cigar smoke in al-Nashiri's face during an interrogation. He said he wouldn't do it again based on "perceived criticism."

In another of the unauthorized incidents that garnered major press, a CIA officer racked a handgun close to al-Nashiri's head once or twice. Later, the officer revved a power drill in the cell with al-Nashiri while he was hooded or naked (he wasn't touched with the drill). The intimidation with the gun and drill hadn't been authorized by headquarters, nor was it immediately reported after it took place.

How it was handled when it came to light is instructive. The agency immediately called the offending officer back to headquarters. He faced an internal accountability board, suffered a reprimand, and eventually resigned. The Justice Department looked into the case because threatening a detainee with "imminent death" is torture, but declined to prosecute. (These unauthorized incidents, which Attorney General Eric Holder

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has asked a prosecutor to examine with an eye to reopening criminal cases, are murky. According to the IG report, "for all of the instances, the allegations were disputed or too ambiguous to reach any authoritative determination regarding the facts.")

Was it worth it? Did the benefits justify walking up to the line of torture? The answer is clearly yes. In a war on terror in which intelligence is paramount, the interrogation program was almost the equivalent of the ULTRA program that broke German codes in World War II. "Detainees have played some role in nearly every capture of al Qaeda members and associates since 2002, including helping us unravel most of the network associated with the now detained 11 September mastermind Khalid Sheik Mohammed," according to the June 3, 2005, CIA document titled "Detainee Reporting Pivotal for the War Against Al Qaeda." Overall, according to the same document, "detainees in mid-2003 helped us build a list of 70 individuals—many of whom we had never heard of before—that al-Qaeda deemed suitable for Western operations."

"Invaluable" is too weak a word for this kind of intelligence. The IG report says that detainees made the CIA aware of plots to attack the U.S. consulate in Karachi, Pakistan; to fly hijacked aircraft into Heathrow Airport; to derail a train in the U.S.; to blow up gas stations in the U.S.; to fly an airplane into the tallest building in California; and to collapse bridges in New York.

"In this regard," the IG report concludes, "there is no doubt that the Program has been effective." The report is more cautious on whether the enhanced techniques themselves accounted for these successes. But the facts make it obvious, and the former CIA inspector general responsible for the report, John Helgerson, recently told the *Washington Post* that "waterboarding and sleep deprivation were the two most powerful techniques and elicited a lot of information." Top terrorists like Zubaydah and al-Nashiri were withholding information prior to the application of the toughest techniques, and were compliant afterward. Surely their decision to talk didn't result from a sudden fit of conscience.

The IG report called KSM "an accomplished resistor" who provided mostly "outdated, inaccurate, or incomplete" information until he was waterboarded. Subsequently, he became the "most prolific" source of important leads. A report in the *Washington Post* portrays the compliant KSM as practically a lecturer in his own School for Advanced Terrorism Studies. He sometimes used a chalkboard as he explained to the CIA officer the details of al-Qaeda's doctrine and inner workings.

The IG report relates how KSM's cooperation led to the arrest of a truck driver in the U.S. named Iyman Faris who was plotting attacks on New York landmarks; of a sleeper operative in New York named Saleh Almari; of an operative named Majid Khan who had easy entrée into the U.S.; and of two Pakistani businessmen whom KSM "planned to use to smuggle explosives into the United States."

Information from interrogations built on itself, as the June 2005 CIA document outlines. KSM knew we had captured an operative named Majid Khan and assumed Khan was talking, so he told us he had directed Khan to deliver money to people working for another senior al-Qaeda operative. We confronted Khan with this information. He, in turn, admitted his role and told us he had delivered the money to an operative called Zubair, providing a description and contact number. We then captured Zubair, who gave us information about a terrorist called Hambali, the contact between the Southeast Asian terror group Jemaah Islamiya and al-Qaeda. We rolled up the entire cell, which was thought to be training for the plot to fly a hijacked plane into the tallest building in California.

In another example of such a virtuous cycle, KSM thought we already knew about al-Qaeda's anthrax program because an operative involved in it named Yazid Sufaat was in custody. KSM told of three operatives who were trying to produce anthrax. We confronted Sufaat with the information and he provided further information that led to the capture of his two associates.

The interrogations really should be viewed as a continuation of the war by different means. When the detainees were compliant, they weren't subjected to harsh techniques—they were no longer in the fight. But if they had knowledge of ongoing plots that they were keeping from us, they were, in effect, still combatants. And coercion was appropriate. Their cell was just the battlefield in a different form.

In a war on terror in which intelligence is paramount, the interrogation program was almost the equivalent of the ULTRA program that broke German codes in World War II.

Throughout the interrogation debate, the Left has peddled a just-so story—that the interrogations were not just wrong, they were ineffective. The documents put that notion to rest. It was always implausible, and the Left insisted on it only because it wanted to argue that its moral absolutism came at no cost. Actually, the cost might have been paid in American blood if we had forgone the toughest techniques—and *certainly* if we had fully embraced a law-enforcement paradigm in which terrorists would have been read their *Miranda* rights and encouraged not to talk lest they incriminate themselves.

Supporters of the program shouldn't fool themselves—strapping a man to a board to convince him he's going to drown, over and over again, is a nasty business, even if we did it to only three detainees. We were forced by the nature of the terrorists arrayed against us to balance our humanity against our duty to keep our fellow citizens safe. That's never going to be an entirely comfortable balance. But it was struck as responsibly as could be expected, as we now know thanks to the release of all those hyped documents. **NR**

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All WEE-WEED Up

Protests on the right, hypocrisy on the left

BY JAY NORDLINGER

DURING last year's presidential campaign, when it seemed likely that Barack Obama would win, conservatives would joke, "One thing's sure: After January 20, dissent will no longer be the highest form of patriotism." We had heard that a lot during the George W. Bush years: "Dissent is the highest form of patriotism." Many on the left thought they were quoting Thomas Jefferson; actually, the words apparently come from Howard Zinn, the contemporary leftist historian. And it's a dumb thing to say: Certainly, dissent can be a form of patriotism. But the highest? Where does that put what Sergeant York and Audie Murphy did? For that matter, where does that leave George Washington?

Obama did indeed win, and "dissent" was, indeed, out: at least in the eyes of left-leaning opinion-makers. Obama was an inspirational president, governing in hard times, and we were all to rally around him: get with the program. Besides, he was historic, because black, and we all owed him our support, right? Not only would dissent not be patriotic; it would, very possibly, be racist—than which there is no worse thing to be in America.

In response to new, mammoth Democratic spending, some citizens were restive, holding what they called "tea parties"—in honor of the Boston Tea Party of revolutionary times. These protesters were mercilessly mocked and defamed. CNN's much-admired anchorman Anderson Cooper said they were "teabagging." He was alluding to an exotic sexual practice. And Janeane Garofalo spoke for much of the Left when she appeared on Keith Olbermann's MSNBC show. The actress and activist said, "Let's be very honest about what this is about. It's not about bashing Democrats. It's not about taxes. They have no idea what the Boston Tea Party was about. They don't know their history at all. This is about hating a black man in the White House. This is racism straight up and is nothing but a bunch of tea-bagging rednecks, and there is no way around that."

When Obama turned to his health-care plans, more people got restive, dismayed at this fundamental change in American life. At town halls, they expressed their displeasure, and the Left commentariat, broadly speaking, expressed their displeasure with them. Signs of anti-Obama criticism were startling, and they were seen as dangerous. In some cases, those signs were literal. Around Los Angeles, someone placed a poster showing Obama as the Joker—from the latest Batman movie—with the word "socialism" underneath. Many commentators said that these signs were not only ghoulish but also (natch) racist. We don't know who came up with "socialism." But the creator of the Joker image? He turned out to be a Palestinian-American student whose choice for president had been Dennis Kucinich (the left-wing flake). He was not, in other words, the expected Klansman.

But charges of racism are ever-present. Diane Watson, a congresswoman from Los Angeles, said, "They are spreading fear and they're trying to see that the first president who looks like me fails." Watson is black. Who are "they"? Obama's health-care critics. Watson went on to heap kooky but common praise on Fidel Castro, and the old dictator himself got into the act. He wrote in his state media (the only media there are in Cuba), "The extreme Right hates [Obama] for being African-American and fights what the president does to improve the deteriorated image of [the United States]. I don't have the slightest doubt that the racist Right will do everything possible to wear him down, blocking his program to get him out of the game one way or another, at the least political cost." Holding forth in that way, Castro could easily be a columnist for, say, the *Boston Globe*.

At times, the health-care protests have been rowdy and obnoxious—like America. In an op-ed piece published in *USA Today*, Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Steny Hoyer, the House majority leader, condemned an "ugly campaign" to "disrupt public meetings" and so on. They said, "Drowning out opposing views is simply un-American." It is certainly undemocratic. But Pelosi, for one, once had very friendly words for rowdy, obnoxious, and disruptive protesters. On the Internet, Andrew Breitbart circulated a video from 2006, showing Pelosi at one of these town-hall meetings. The focus of the citizens' ire was George W. Bush and the Iraq War. She said to this extremely angry bunch, "I thank all of you who have spoken out for your courage, your point of view—all of it. Your advocacy is very American and very important." When the room got almost out of control, a man who appears to have been the moderator of this session—it's unclear from the video—appealed for calm. Pelosi said, very sweetly and reasonably, "That's okay, that's okay." When a woman shouted at her without cease, Pelosi said, "I understand your anger." She could not have been more forbearing and patient—like a dear, tender aunt. She later said, "I'm a fan of disruptors, people who make change." And she said, "Let's not question each other's patriotism when we're having this very honest debate that our country expects and deserves."

Words to live by.

Some protesters have been carted away from town-hall meetings on health care. A man from Londonderry, N.H.—a retired New York City patrolman—turned up at a meeting with his congresswoman, Carol Shea-Porter. He stood to ask a question, or make a statement, about unionists in the room: He thought that the congresswoman had stacked the hall with them, and wondered whether they even lived in New Hampshire. Shea-Porter had him removed: because he did not have a ticket to ask a question. She had earlier held a lottery, and only winners—those with tickets—could ask questions. She had also called critics of Obamacare "teabaggers," following the practice established by CNN's Cooper in the spring. And New Hampshirites noted an irony: Shea-Porter herself had once been a town-hall disruptor, an activist on the left.

The retired New York cop was a benign protester: or perhaps not even a protester at all, just someone seeking answers. But there have been protesters who have smelled of violence. One man showed up with a gun outside a town-hall meeting featuring

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Obama himself. (The gun was legal.) He had also brought a sign: about watering the tree of liberty. Another protester, outside a different meeting—not featuring the president—had a sign that was more direct: "Death to Obama." He was duly handed over to the Secret Service.

Surveying the town-hall meetings across the nation—nasty ones and merely raucous ones—commentators have had a field day: warning against militias, new McVeighs, and "right-wing rage" in general. A notable left-wing writer is Rick Perlstein, who acts as kind of an anthropologist studying the Right. Like Malinowski among the Trobrianders, he examines conservative America, then reports back to amazed readers in civilization. He has recently published a piece in the *Washington Post*: "In America, Crazy Is a Preexisting Condition: Birthers, Town Hall Hecklers and the Return of Right-Wing Rage." (The term "birthers" refers to those with an unhealthy interest in President Obama's birth certificate.)

Funny, but you never read about "left-wing rage." Is that because "right-wing rage" is alliterative, and "left-wing rage" not? Orwell once remarked that you can never be a "rabid anti-Nazi" or a "rabid anti-fascist": You can only be a "rabid anti-Communist." If you are more than vaguely or discreetly anti-Communist, you are "rabid."

Commentators of the Left seem not to accept conservative protest as legitimate at all. They seem practically offended at the very idea of conservative protest: because activism, energy, passion, and all that are supposed to come from the left. And grassroots are not supposed to figure in conservative soil. Indeed, when Pelosi was asked about health-care protesters, she called them "AstroTurf"—i.e., not real. And many have viewed the conservatives, not as an engaged citizenry, but as a mob. You will remember Peter Jennings, the late anchorman for ABC News. He epitomized left-liberal urbanity. And after the 1994 midterm elections, which were good for the Republicans and bad for the Democrats, he said that the voters had thrown "a two-year-old temper tantrum." That is the mindset—the critical mindset—evident now.

President Obama himself seems a little miffed: He is the one used to doing the protesting, the community-organizing. And now that he is president—can't everyone just fall in line, stay organized? Addressing the issue of health care, he said, "I don't want the folks who created the mess to do a lot of talking. I want them just to get out of the way . . ." Exactly.

In general, the Democratic party and the media class are "all wee-weed up," to use an Obama phrase. They are appalled at the conservative protesters, shocked that such rough and noisy criticism could occur in America. "Hate" is filling the air, they say. And their assassination worries are mounting: What if someone took a shot at, not just the president, but the first black president? You perhaps remember the Bush years—the eight years of George W. Bush. They did not occur so long ago. Let's do a little revisiting.

Howard Dean—not an unwashed citizen, but a man who was soon to be chairman of the Democratic National Committee—said, "I hate the Republicans and everything they stand for." Plus, "This," meaning politics, "is a struggle of good and evil. And we're the good." An editor of *The New Republic* wrote a piece called "The Case for Bush Hatred." It began, "I hate President George W. Bush"—well, of course.

No one was more inflammatory or mendacious about Bush than Michael Moore, the filmmaker. He made a movie alleging, among other things, that Bush went to war in Afghanistan, not to rout the Taliban and al-Qaeda, but to benefit his business cronies. Almost the entire Democratic establishment turned out for this movie's Washington premiere. Covering the event, Byron York asked Terry McAuliffe, who was chairman of the DNC (pre-Dean), whether he agreed with Moore on Afghanistan. He said yes. At the 2004 Democratic convention, Jimmy Carter asked Moore to sit with him in the presidential box. He told Moore that there was no one he would rather sit with. Later, the ex-president told Emory students that the movie, *Fahrenheit 9/11*, was his favorite of all time, along with *Casablanca*.

Some Democrats—Pelosi, Barney Frank—have been upset that town-hall protesters have brought up the Nazis, when talking about Obamacare and such. Do they remember the Bush years at all—when comparisons to the Nazis were ubiquitous and incessant? "Bushitler" became a routine term. Former senator John Glenn, objecting to Republican campaign rhetoric, said, "It's the old Hitler business." Al Gore said that the Bush administration was "unleash[ing] squadrons of digital brownshirts." Julian Bond, as chairman of the NAACP, said of the Bushies, "Their idea of equal rights is the American flag and the Confederate swastika flying side by side." Rep. Keith Ellison, Democrat of Minnesota, compared 9/11 to the Reichstag fire. In a long list of epithets, Garrison Keillor, the National Public Radio favorite, called Republicans "brownshirts in pinstripes." Etc., etc.

And I have merely cited political and intellectual leaders, not ordinary rabble, who were far worse.

And shall we talk about assassination? Even before Bush was elected president, the kill-Bush talk and imagery started. When Governor Bush was delivering his 2000 convention speech, Craig Kilborn, a CBS talk-show host, showed him on the screen with the words "SNIPERS WANTED." Six years later, Bill Maher, the comedian-pundit, was having a conversation with John Kerry. He asked the senator what he had gotten his wife for her birthday. Kerry answered that he had taken her to Vermont. Maher said, "You could have went to New Hampshire and killed two birds with one stone." (New Hampshire is an early primary state, of course.) Kerry said, "Or I could have gone to 1600 Pennsylvania and killed the real bird with one stone." (This is the same Kerry who joked in 1988, "Somebody told me the other day that the Secret Service has orders that if George Bush is shot, they're to shoot Quayle.") Also in 2006, the New York comptroller, Alan Hevesi, spoke to graduating students at Queens College. He said that his fellow Democrat, Sen. Charles Schumer, would "put a bullet between the president's eyes if he could get away with it."

A columnist in Britain's *Guardian*, Charlie Brooker, wrote,

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"John Wilkes Booth, Lee Harvey Oswald, John Hinckley Jr.—where are you now that we need you?" Betty Williams, the Irishwoman who won the Nobel Peace Prize, said, "I have a very hard time with this word 'non-violence,' because I don't believe that I am non-violent. . . . Right now, I would love to kill George Bush." A novelist, Nicholson Baker, was so filled with rage at Bush, he wrote a novel mulling the question of assassinating him. In Britain, there was a TV movie—a "fictional documentary"—that was a kind of fantasy: on the assassination of Bush. (It was called *Death of a President*.) Etc., etc.

The anonymous photographer-blogger who maintains zombietime.com has done something remarkable: assembled a large collection of photos from anti-Bush and anti-Republican rallies—including Obama rallies. This makes for sickening viewing: all the signs calling for Bush's death, all the severed Bush heads, the burning effigies, and so on. There is a delightful bumper sticker saying "SUPPORT BUSH" and showing a noose. All in all, this was a years-long orgy of, not just Bush-hatred, but murderous hatred toward that president. To paraphrase a onetime presidential candidate (Bob Dole), where was the outrage?

Nowhere—certainly not in establishment quarters. But there is outrage, or at least fierce indignation, at the relatively tame protesters who are giving Obama and his policies a hard time. You remember Cindy Sheehan, that media star, who had a son killed in Iraq and dedicated herself to hounding President Bush? Such media grandees as Charlie Gibson once danced attention on her. She is a forlorn figure in the Age of Obama. Before she went to Martha's Vineyard, where President Obama was vacationing, to continue her protests, Gibson was asked what he thought. He concluded, "Enough already." And that can be said about anti-presidential protest in general: now that the un-Bush is in. Can you imagine the reaction if a CBS talk-show host showed a picture of Obama giving a speech and put up the words "SNIPERS WANTED"?

I must say, at a personal level, that it was sickening—almost literally sickening—to go through the materials assembled at zombietime.com. There is a depravity in that collection that you might not have thought possible in America, this basically easy-going, non-jacobinical country. I could never quite get used to the Bush-hatred, sustained as it was. I could tell you several anecdotes—here is one: At a dinner party on the Upper East Side of Manhattan one night, conversation turned to 9/11. I mentioned that the "Pennsylvania plane"—the one essentially brought down by extraordinarily brave passengers—had probably been destined for the Capitol or the White House. My hostess, a notably civilized and kind lady, said, "I wish George W. Bush had been killed that day." I feel sure that she meant it—as did many other Americans.

And they are hardly positioned now to condemn the anti-Obama protesters. But all the smart people are consumed with worry about militiamen, brownshirts. On *Meet the Press*, host David Gregory asked a conservative senator whether he was troubled by threats of "violence against the government." Well, that is a fine question to ask now. Did he notice the murderous displays against Bush? All of us have a little hypocrisy in us, probably. And to point out hypocrisy, as I have done in this article, is one of the easiest things in the world. But the current hypocrisy reeks so bad, it's surprising that even the hypocrites don't smell it. **NR**

In Defense of The Book

A reply to the critics of Digital Barbarism

BY MARK HELPRIN

Two years ago, in complete innocence that I was parachuting into a holy war, I wrote for the *New York Times* an op-ed piece addressing disparities in the treatment of copyrighted versus other forms of property. This then generated, courtesy of verbally ferocious youths offended by resistance to their imagined entitlements, three-quarters of a million Internet hissy fits, many written at a beastly level, and others, even if only patronizing, displaying an inability to comprehend the English language, not to mention the least of its subtleties.

Because corporate defenders of intellectual property think they need only protect established law, they sit inertially in their towers and forfeit the more general debate to their active and numerous opponents. Thus, unwittingly engaged and with neither allies nor organizational support of any kind, I thought the only way to respond to hundreds of thousands (perhaps millions) of critics mobilized by "public interest" groups richly funded by private interests such as Google, was to write a book. Without pictures, links, or instantaneous transmission throughout the world, or thousands of wiki-coauthors, it would be an artifact of paper and ink that almost certainly would be overwhelmed by tidal waves of impatient electronic criticism. But then, over time and according to its merits, it might rise to the surface and remain, while, like all waves, the transient, substanceless agitation against it would leave no trace other than the scars of its damage.

Copyright was the sometimes sparkling, controversial fuse I used as an armature for a much expanded argument in regard to the relationship of man and machine, in which I attacked directly into the assault of modernism, collectivism, militant atheism, utilitarianism, mass conformity, and like things that are poison to the natural pace and requirements of the soul, that reify what those who say there is no soul believe is left, and that, in a headlong rush to fashion man solely after his own conceptions, are succeeding. The greater the success of this tendency, however, the unhappier are its adherents and the more they seek after their unavailing addictions, which, like the explanation for nymphomania, is not surprising. It is especially true in regard to the belief that happiness and salvation can be found in gadgets: i.e., toy worship.

I addressed this. I defended property as a moral necessity of liberty. I attempted to reclaim Jefferson from the presumptuous embrace of the copyleft. (Even the docents at Monticello misinterpret Jefferson, failing to recognize his deep and abiding love of the

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ROMAN GENN

divine order.) And I advanced a proposition to which the critics of copyright have been made allergic by their collectivist education—that the great achievement of Western civilization is the evolution from corporate to individual right, from man defined, privileged, or oppressed by cast, clan, guild, ethnicity, race, sex, and creed, to the individual's rights and privileges that once were the province only of kings. This has taken thousands of years, and would never have happened without the protection and encouragement of the individual voice, of which copyright is one of the chief guarantors. Even the president of the United States cannot legitimately change a single comma in a work under copyright. Consider this in respect of the fact that the universal tendency of abusive power is to erase and suppress inconvenient assertion and belief.

Perhaps because *Digital Barbarism* is embedded almost promiscuously with stories and anecdotes in illustration of its arguments, and because it is written densely enough that legions of critics complain that they can't understand it (they can't understand the Constitution, either), its 250 pages cannot be justly summarized in a few paragraphs. But this is its concluding passage:

> The new, digital barbarism is, in its language, comportment, thoughtlessness, and obeisance to force and power, very much like the old. And like the old, and every form of tyranny, hard or soft, it is most vulnerable to a bright light shone upon it. To call it for what it is, to examine it while paying no heed to its rich bribes and powerful coercions, to contrast it to what it presumes to replace, is to begin the long fight against it.
>
> Very clearly, the choice is between the preeminence of the individual or of the collective, of improvisation or of routine, of the soul or of the machine. It is a choice that perhaps you have already made, without knowing it. Or perhaps it has been made for you. But it is always possible to opt in or out, because your affirmations are your own, the court of judgement your mind and heart. These are free, and you are the sovereign, always. Choose.

I expected nothing more than choked fulminations from the backers of the arguments I took on, although they did take the new tack that they couldn't understand what I was saying, and I believe them. And because it seems necessary to their physiology to think that I am for perpetual copyright—as an originalist, I can't be, and anyway never have been—they continue to insist that I am. They repeated their contention that because illegal copying doesn't obliterate other copies, it isn't a zero-sum game, although if there is a limited pool of buyers (as there must be), each pirated copy reduces it, in what is, in fact, a zero-sum game. They accused me yet again of being a Luddite, but I have no quarrel with machines. My quarrel is with *them*; that is, with people who surrender to machines their time, judgment, discrimination, emotions, and humanity. And, confined like moles to the narrow tunnels of the electronic culture, they not only did not understand my broader arguments, they didn't know I was making them.

In the world of letters, it took a better and more learned essayist than I am, Joseph Epstein, to appreciate my argument fully, but I could hardly expect as much of the *New York Times*, in the pages of which it has been suggested that my political views arise from mental illness; or of such organs as the ever-tumescent *Vanity Fair* (oh, to have your baby aborted by Fidel Castro on Mick Jagger's private jet!), which once classified me beyond Gore Vidal's assessment of Bill Buckley as a crypto-Nazi, by trading "Nazi" for "fascist" and dispensing with the "crypto." The *Times*'s always temperate and judicious Michiko Kakutani described my essay, and me, variously, as "pompous," "sanctimonious," "full of contempt . . . snarky, ad hominem . . . gratuitously nasty . . . pretentious . . . ill-tempered . . . absurd . . . uptight, modernity-hating . . . bullying" and "pigheaded." Oink. Enchanted by adjectives, she neglected to oppose my arguments and even endorsed some of them, but went into anaphylactic shock because of the following paragraph, which was subsequently daisy-chained across almost every review of the book.

> It would be one thing if such a revolution produced Mozarts, Einsteins, or Raphaels, but it doesn't. It produces mouth-breathing

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morons in backwards baseball caps and pants that fall down; Slurpee-sucking geeks who seldom see daylight; pretentious and earnest hipsters who want you to wear bamboo socks so the world doesn't end; women who have lizard tattoos winding from the navel to the nape of the neck; beer-drinking dufuses who pay to watch noisy cars driving around in a circle for eight hours at a stretch; and an entire race of females, now entering middle age, that speaks in North American chipmunk and seldom makes a statement without, like, a question mark at the end?

Apparently Michiko Kakutani thinks that the only people who may express strong preferences are people whose name is Michiko Kakutani. In regard to the passage upon which she and so many others seem fixed, I confess that I am repelled by whole-body tattoos, that I regard trousers belted at mid-thigh as a kind of warning signal, and that I thought then, and nature tends to confirm, that I was crafting a euphemism. Whole generations, however, have been raised to believe that it is an outrage to criticize anyone but white Republican businessmen, and her reaction parallels that of the mother who, responding to her child's declaration that he hated 2 percent milk, with narrowed eyes, tight lips, and a look that could turn Bert Parks to stone, spat out the words, "*We don't use the word 'hate.*'"

Though it is true that since my earliest infancy my sole object has been to gain the approval of the *New York Times*, and that as it was withheld I was driven to become a psychotic curmudgeon, for the record, I don't hate anyone in that oft-cited passage. Nor did I create them, or the people I quote who think, for example, that one's children are one's ancestors; that all contracts are limited by ten-year statutes of limitations; that "the sooner we can all get past the 'idea' that anyone can own the thoughts, the words, the music, the sooner we can survive the possibly ensuing class war and get down to the business of evolving our eventual hive mind"; and that "'property' is a relationship between freely conversing individuals." I merely portrayed them, with less rancor than amazement, in no more than four or five pages out of a quarter of a thousand.

I WAITED to be rescued by the Right, but I was waiting in vain. Nearly every publication, left, right, and center, assigned the book, with *digital* in its title, to a resident *digeratus*, a member of the very tribe I provoke, and thus it was that I came to sell rosaries in Mecca. Even NR's print reviewer reproduced the by now emblematic paragraph, pointing out that NASCAR and hip-hop predated the digital revolution, and that (by implication) I don't know what the hell I'm talking about. Except that, very clearly, I address the digital revolution as a subspecies of the machine revolution and the Enlightenment, both of which predate the Slurpee. And it is why in making my argument I cite, and count as allies, Churchill, Thomas Hardy, Flannery O'Connor, Shakespeare, Yeats, Montaigne, and even Charles de Gaulle, among others, none of whom was likely a NASCAR fan or wore backwards underwear (although you can never tell with Thomas Hardy—he was a wild one).

Another strain of nearly substantive criticism, this from the—sort of—right, was Ross Douthat's *New York Times Book Review* review, in which he described a cartoon about a man is shocked to discover that something on the Internet is untrue. Translation: I myself am so unhip as to have been spurred to indignation by what I found there, when everyone in the know makes sensible allowances for the fact that this is just the way it is. Well, as Neil Kinnock used to say, "I know that, Prime Minister." I know what things have become: They are what I criticize, even at the expense of being unhip. I don't want to be hip. I would rather be reincarnated as a happy aquatic worm in a North Korean septic tank—and if Barack Obama really is God, I will be.

When you combine all the things that by certain definitions one must be uncool to protest—inaccuracy, incivility, deliberate distortion, dirty tricks, vulgarity, threat, false attribution, and alterability of source, fact, and text—with history's most efficient means of distributing opinion and information, what you get is acquiescence to the widespread degradation in which the electronic culture brings the vices of the political war room to what now passes for intellectual life.

Along with the four-decades-old New Journalism, this culture depends upon constant indulgence of curiosity and a nihilistic surrender to any kind of compellingness. Its devotees are embarked upon a sort of slam-bam-thank-you-ma'am journey through a world of evanescence, so that in a life only of cool flashes they see a million shooting stars and not one sun. Having rejected no temptation and accepted every transient stimulus, at the end of the day, when their electronic devices go to sleep, they are left with little more than crackles and static.

In 1807, Wordsworth held that the world was too much with us late and soon. Little did he know. What with BlackBerries, Blueteeth, iPhones, webcams, Twitter, and a never-ending creation of time-absorbing toys, intrusions, penetrations, and precooked programs, the tyranny of which we are not supposed to notice, scores—perhaps hundreds—of millions of people no longer have a life of their own, and can neither sit still nor face a moment of solitude without the oxygen of an incoming or outgoing flicker. As John Maynard Keynes famously said about Lloyd George, "When he is alone in the room there is nobody there." Too many people are in danger of becoming or have become what the Italians call *industriali*: extensions and servants of a machine culture of which they fancy themselves the masters when in truth they are the slaves.

The narrative of any youth-directed epoch, the advent of which the last presidential election confirms, is that the past was egregiously inferior to either the present in the form to which youth are recasting it, or a future for which now the people who type with their thumbs are making transcendentally ambitious plans. My narrative and book are just the opposite. That is not to say that I attribute to the past the perfection that some see so close at hand if their revisions are implemented, but to believe that at this moment the character, the art, the pace of things, and man's idea of his place in the universe, his powers, obligations, and destiny are sick and confused. Whereas in the past, burdened as it was by slavery, uncontrollable disease, and mass warfare, the tools of existence were largely capable of leading us out of them, the new tools of existence are capable of leading us back into them. This is not an opinion that a self-congratulatory era views with affection.

Digital Barbarism is not as much a defense of copyright as it is an attack upon a distortion of culture that has become a false savior in an age of many false saviors. Despite its lack of mechanical perfections, humanity, as stumbling and awkward as it is, is far superior to the machine. It always has been and always will be, and this conviction must never be surrendered. But surrender these days is incremental, seems painless, and comes so quietly that warnings are drowned in silence. **NR**

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The Long View

BY ROB LONG

TRANSCRIPT: Interrogation of Detainee 00-287, codenamed: MasterMind

[Present: Department of Justice Legal Supervisor; Deputy Chief Counsel, Interrogation Compliance, Department of Defense; Central Intelligence Legal Affairs Representative; Interrogator's Personal Counsel; Detainee's Court-Ordered Counsel; Department of Homeland Security Compliance Officer; Detainee; Interrogator.]

DETAINEE: Death to America.
INTERROGATOR: This is session one of the interrogation of Detainee 00-287, codenamed MasterMind. We will be discussing in this first session the current state and org-chart of al-Qaeda, its current activities in the Middle East theater, and its current plans for terrorist activity in the United States.
DETAINEE: Death to America.
DHS COMPLIANCE OFFICER: Please read the Statement of Compliance.
INTERROGATOR: Okay. Here goes. Let me begin this session by saying that we will fully comply with new administration guidelines on interrogation techniques and standards, and are fully cognizant of our duties and responsibilities and waive all rights and indemnifications thereunto pertaining.
DOJ LEGAL SUPERVISOR: And the Religious Disclaimer please.
INTERROGATOR: Okay. Nothing in this interrogation or its work product should be construed in any way to reflect negatively on any religion or creed, and we interrogate without regard to a detainee's belief or belief system, sexual orientation, economic background, or ethnic identity.
INTERROGATION COMPLIANCE OFFICER, DOD: Please read the Customer Service Message.
INTERROGATOR: Okay. To the detainee: It is my express goal to provide you, the detainee, with excellent service this afternoon. If at any time you are not satisfied with your service, please inform your counsel immediately, or if counsel is not present, call our 800 number listed in your Welcome Packet.
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE LEGAL AFFAIRS: I think we can proceed now.
INTERROGATOR: Okay, let's get started. But first, can I get you some coffee?
DHS COMPLIANCE OFFICER: Wait. Let me stop you there. Are you prepared to offer a decaf option to the detainee?
INTERROGATOR: We don't have decaf.
DHS COMPLIANCE OFFICER: Then you're in violation of the Choice of Beverages Directive, and I'm going to have to bring this interrogation to a close.
DETAINEE: Death to America.
DETAINEE'S COUNSEL: I'd like my client's remarks stricken from the record.
INTERROGATOR: On what grounds?
DETAINEE'S COUNSEL: On the grounds that according to the Comfortable and Nurturing Environment Presidential Directive of 2009, he is currently being tortured and coerced into making statements and claims that he cannot legally be held accountable for.
DETAINEE: Death to America.
DETAINEE'S COUNSEL: Again, move to strike.
INTERROGATOR: What if I don't offer coffee?
DOJ LEGAL SUPERVISOR: According to our interpretation of the Detainee Hospitality Act, as long as no beverage is proffered, no choice of beverage needs to be available.
INTERROGATOR: Fine. Okay. Let's continue—
INTERROGATOR'S PERSONAL COUNSEL: Just a second. Can I have that waiver in writing?
DOJ LEGAL SUPERVISOR: From the Department of Justice?
INTERROGATOR'S PERSONAL COUNSEL: Before my client can proceed with his interrogation, I'm going to need a written and approved finding from all of you—DOJ, Homeland, Central Intelligence, Defense, all of you—stating that the consensus interpretation of the Soothing, Chillaxed Vibe subsection of the Detainee Hospitality Act—
DHS COMPLIANCE OFFICER: For simplicity's sake, let's just refer to it as the Pelosi Amendment—
INTERROGATOR'S PERSONAL COUNSEL: Fine. I'll need a signed statement of consensus from all of you before I can recommend that my client proceed with this interrogation.
DEPUTY CHIEF COUNSEL, COMPLIANCE, DOD: We don't offer findings of that nature. The most we can do is file a notation that extraordinary measures have been taken to assure compliance with the Act, and that in every other instance the detainee has been offered his due rights and privileges under the Act, and with total compliance to food, beverage, religious worship, and spa treatments.
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE LEGAL AFFAIRS: We've got trouble with the "total compliance" language.
DETAINEE: Death to America.
INTERROGATOR: Fine. Fine. How about I send someone out for a Starbucks run? They've got it all—decaf, cappuccino, frappuccino, regular brew—would that satisfy the Pelosi Rule?
DEPUTY CHIEF COUNSEL, COMPLIANCE, DOD: Yep.
DHS COMPLIANCE OFFICER: Absolutely.
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE LEGAL AFFAIRS: It would.
DETAINEE'S COUNSEL: We're cool with that.
INTERROGATOR'S PERSONAL COUNSEL: I formally recommend to my client that he proceed with the Starbucks run. And I'll have a grande nonfat latte.
DEPUTY CHIEF COUNSEL, COMPLIANCE, DOD: Dry soy macchiato.
DHS COMPLIANCE OFFICER: Venti drip with whole milk.
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE LEGAL AFFAIRS: Iced nonfat latte with a shot of vanilla.
DETAINEE'S COUNSEL: Grande cap. You want anything?
DETAINEE: Death to America.
DETAINEE'S COUNSEL: Just put him down for an Ethos Water and a lemon pound cake. I know what he likes.
DETAINEE: Death to America.

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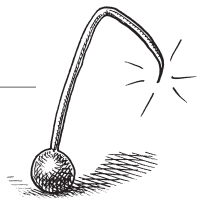

The Bent Pin

BY FLORENCE KING

Put Down That Pitchfork

If the season of town-hall meetings has left you shell-shocked and cringing, you are not alone. Or maybe it's the other way around: You applauded the apoplectic convulsions of the Grassroots Right and it's I who am alone. In that case I'm in for another epistolary nuking such as I got when I defended the deportation of Elián González and some of you wrote me, "Go back to Cuba!"

Let not your heart be troubled, as Sean Hannity would say. Despite my distaste for the town-hall howlers I am in no danger of turning into an Obamamaniac. If you tried to get to the right of me you would fall off the end of the earth because, you see, it's flat. I started out as a paleoconservative but that eventually ceased to satisfy. Paleos are comparable to the Romans of the Early Republic, but I had stopped believing in republics because they invariably degenerate into democracy, that Great Fan that everything hits sooner or later. There was only one place for me, politically and temperamentally, so I became a royalist. I believe in absolute monarchy and the divine right of kings, but other than that I'm moving left.

The conjunction of politics and temperament is the key to the personal peace of individuals, but when politics and temperament go their separate ways individuals become disturbers of the peace. A major problem I have with the Grassroots Right is all that grass. Rural people shout naturally in the course of a typical day much more than constrained people do. Making themselves heard over noisy machinery and calling bingo numbers loudly enough to reach the players in the back row, they develop habits that are made to order for political free-for-alls, but not for the 18th-century Whig salon, the cradle of classic conservatism, whose dictum was "Demolish your enemies without raising your voice."

But people who never raise their voices remind the Grassroots Right of the boneless susurrations of elitist liberals on PBS roundtables and the wink-wink, nod-nod of their snide allusions. Therefore, quiet is bad (make that "evil") and real men don't allude. Actually they do, and one such allusion by an iconic conservative would have suited the Grassy Roots to a T in their war on government health care.

In 1945, when Churchill lost the post of prime minister to Labourite Clement Attlee, the two spent the transition time in close quarters. They had to use the same men's room, but if Attlee came in while Churchill was there, Churchill left immediately, not returning until he was sure he would be alone. The socialist Attlee was amused, interpreting it as a social snub from the grandson of a duke, and asked him, "Why so modest, Winston?" Whereupon Churchill, without raising his voice, demolished him with: "Because whenever you see something big, you want to nationalize it."

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Whenever the Grassroots Right sees something big, they want to deregulate it and turn it over to the private sector in the sacred name of competition because monopolies are bad (make that "evil"). But things haven't turned out the way the deregulators of the '80s planned. I remember when AT&T was called "the phone company," period, because it was the only place where you could get a phone. Yes, they were a monopoly, but our bills remained the same year after year because they were a regulated monopoly. Now, the behemoths of our "communications systems" make AT&T look like a mom-and-pop store. Instead of being merely nationally big, they are now globally big, and instead of the lower rates competition was supposed to bring, they can and do charge whatever they dare because they are unregulated.

If this is the new capitalism, I'm against it. The Grassroots Right's hatred of government regulation is a prime example of a break between politics and temperament. Liberals have a pulsating faith in mankind's inborn capacity for progress. Rousseau preached it constantly, hammering home his pet theory that there was nothing wrong with people, it was just their institutions that made them do bad things, like price gouging. Therefore, tear down the institutions, as the French Revolution did, and people will once again be good as nature intended.

Classic conservatives take a dim view of this kind of happy talk. We are the downbeat party, prone to distrusting human nature and inclined to the Hobbesian view that man, left to his own devices, would reduce what we now call the quality of life to something "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." If America promoted temperamental correctness instead of political correctness, the Grassroots Right would expect the worst of free-wheeling competitors and, backed up by their Bible-based fundamentalism, would favor strict regulation of them.

Woodrow Wilson once received a letter from a woman who asked him to repeal the law of averages. If we want to straighten out the present confused state of American conservatism, we should repeal human nature (make that "evil"). Until we do, the federal government should regulate every private sector, from "friendly" banks to health-"care" insurers, that tries any funny business.

I sympathize with the Grassroots Right in one way: Trying to blend conservatism with American folksiness is enough to make anybody start screaming in public. But what I can't forgive is their Cult of the Book. As soon as I saw the "Ayn Rand Was Right" signs at one town-hall meeting, I knew: People who rarely read any book at all were reading *Atlas Shrugged*. I read it when it came out in '57 and still remember groaning halfway through, "Okay! I get it! You can stop now!" But Rand didn't, and the Grassy Roots didn't. Some people read 50 books a year; others read one book 50 times, and you can always tell the difference by the pile-driving insistence on reiterating their points that they bring to town-hall meetings. **NR**

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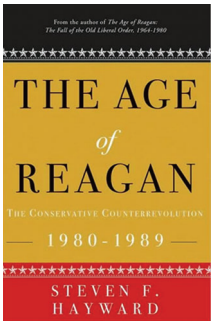
Reagan: Freeway or Detour?

WILLIAM VOEGELI


From the author of The Age of Reagan: The Fall of the Old Liberal Order, 1964-1980
THE AGE of REAGAN
THE CONSERVATIVE COUNTERREVOLUTION
1980-1989
STEVEN F. HAYWARD

The Age of Reagan: The Conservative Counterrevolution, 1980–1989, by Steven F. Hayward (Crown Forum, 753 pp., $35)

On Nov. 3, 1964, Barry Goldwater suffered a landslide defeat. It followed a presidential campaign in which the notorious "Daisy commercial" showed an adorable little girl, seconds before she is vaporized by a nuclear explosion, while Lyndon Johnson intoned, "We must either love each other, or we must die." On Nov. 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall was breached. One reason the world avoided global annihilation despite not establishing universal love is that, in the intervening 25 years and 6 days, Ronald Reagan became a politician, a governor, Goldwater's successor as the leader of the conservative movement, and a two-term president.

With the publication of *The Conservative Counterrevolution*, Steven Hayward completes *The Age of Reagan*, his compelling examination of this remarkable quarter century. In 2001 Hayward, a scholar affiliated with both the American Enterprise Institute and the Pacific Research Institute, published this study's first volume, *The Fall of the Old Liberal Order, 1964–1980*. Reagan was offstage during long stretches of that book, which Hayward described as "one part biography, one part narrative chronicle, and one part political analysis." By contrast, the narration and analysis have a single focal point in *Counterrevolution*, since Reagan's biography and America's history became completely intertwined during the 1980s.

Every conservative should read, and ponder, *The Age of Reagan*. Although much has changed since, and because of, Reagan's presidency, the fundamental questions Americans confront about how to preserve our experiment in self-government are the same ones Reagan grappled with. It would be a shame, however—but no surprise—if *only* conservatives read Hayward's provocative and sweeping assessment. Readers can, in fact, choose an *Age of Reagan* that suits their politics. Conservatives will gravitate to Hayward's, while liberals can buy the single-volume one by Princeton's Sean Wilentz, published in 2008.

Both writers are working from a template laid down by the late Arthur Schlesinger Jr., who from 1957 to 1960 published three volumes of *The Age of Roosevelt*, which he never completed. (The title of Hayward's first volume is a reworking of Schlesinger's first, *The Crisis of the Old Order*, while Wilentz's book is dedicated to Schlesinger's memory.) For starters, an age can "belong" to an American president only if the list of measures that are politically possible and impossible changes dramatically and durably because of how he governed. Even presidents who win reelection, but work within a predecessor's framework, don't qualify; there'll be no one to write or read *The Age of Eisenhower*, *Clinton*, or *Bush*.

Schlesinger's example is cautionary, as well. His *Age of Roosevelt* is a 1,700-page valentine to FDR. That's not the problem, however. The problem, as Thomas B. Silver established in *Coolidge and the Historians*, is that Schlesinger followed the evidence wherever it led . . . as long as it led where he wanted to go. When it didn't, Schlesinger had no discernible compunction about selecting or shading the evidence to support his preselected thesis.

There is never any doubt that Hayward is a conservative and Wilentz a liberal, but both hold themselves to higher standards of intellectual honesty than Schlesinger. Wilentz, despite many criticisms of Reagan, concludes, "His success in helping finally to end the Cold War is one of the greatest achievements by any president of the United States—and arguably the greatest single presidential achievement since 1945." Hayward, despite clear admiration for Reagan, does not shrink from criticizing him strongly. He says, for example, that Reagan's initial appointments to the most important foreign- and domestic-policy posts in his administration, Alexander Haig as secretary of state and David Stockman as director of the Office of Management and Budget, were both huge blunders, going so far as to call Stockman the "Robert McNamara of the Reagan administration." (This is no small disparagement. In *The Fall of the Old Liberal Order*, Hayward approvingly quotes a military historian who labeled McNamara "the most disastrous American public servant of the 20th century," one who combined "a know-it-all arrogance with a capacity for monumental misjudgment and a dearth of moral courage worthy of Albert Speer.")

Nor does Hayward mince words about the Iran-Contra scandal—it must "dominate any serious evaluation of the Reagan administration"—or Reagan's responsibility for leading his administration "down a path to dishonor." He calls the Reagan policy on Nicaragua "incoherent," because the administration never decided, or made clear, whether it intended merely to democratize or ultimately to overthrow the Sandinista regime. The detached management style that served Reagan well when the right personnel were in place engendered chaotic ineptitude when they weren't. Yet Reagan's "reluctance to fire people who deserved it" allowed a bad situation to become a debacle, according to Hayward. He also says that Reagan was "misled by his potent imagination" into believing that negotiating with Iran through an intermediary, rather than directly, somehow

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inoculated the administration from accusations that it had traded arms for hostages. Though frequently, perhaps too frequently and defensively, insisting that Reagan's firm principles and command of the details that mattered meant that the "typical condescension" toward him was "wide of the mark," Hayward gently raises the question of whether the Alzheimer's disease that Reagan publicly disclosed in November 1994 had begun to affect him, and his job performance, as much as a decade earlier.

Hayward reserves his strongest and most detailed criticism for Reagan's 1984 "morning in America" reelection campaign. The decision to run a "defensive" and "generic" campaign was a "mistake of historic proportions," even "one of the greatest lost opportunities in American politics." With inflation broken, the economy surging, and Democrats in disarray, Reagan was in a strong position to make the election a choice between parties with irreconcilable principles. A tactically and intellectually coordinated GOP campaign that sought to "shatter and humiliate" the Democrats, in the words of Charles Kesler, could have decisively shaped American politics for more than a generation, as FDR's victory in 1936 had done. Instead, says Hayward, Reagan's "feckless" emphasis on America's "renewed sense of optimism" squandered the chance not just to defeat but to delegitimize the opposition party.

Reagan suffered some of the consequences of this political failure in his second term. Despite the fact that he carried 49 states against Walter Mondale, his party had a net loss of two Senate seats in 1984, reducing its majority to 53–47. Seven Democratic incumbents won in states where Reagan received more than 60 percent of the popular vote. Jay Rockefeller and Al Gore won two additional open seats in states Reagan carried with 55 and 59 percent of the vote, respectively. A campaign as focused and effective as the one that saw the GOP pick up twelve seats in 1980 could certainly have reversed some of these results. Had it done so, the 1986 elections might not have delivered the Senate back to the Democrats. A Republican Senate for Reagan's entire eight years in office would have expedited rather than prolonged the examination of Iran-Contra and placed Robert Bork on the Supreme Court.

Republicans did better in the 1984 House elections, in the limited sense that they gained 16 seats, leaving Democrats with a still-comfortable 253–182 majority. In fact, after 1981–82, when it was possible to find 26 or more "boll weevil" Democrats to join the 192 Republicans in the House to pass some of Reagan's biggest proposals, Democrats never had less than 58 percent of the seats in the House for the duration of Reagan's presidency. In 1984, an astonishing 189 congressional districts gave more votes to Reagan than to Mondale while simultaneously electing a Democrat to the House. (Exactly one, Manhattan's "silk-stocking district," gave majorities to both Mondale and a Republican congressional candidate. He, Bill Green, was defeated by Carolyn Maloney eight years later, and the district has been Democratic ever since.)

Hayward is at pains to demonstrate that "Reagan never made a serious or sustained case against the Democratic Congress [in 1984], never argued that he couldn't govern unless the Democratic Congress was turned out." Democrats added to their huge congressional gains in 1930 and 1932 with smaller but significant increases in 1934 and 1936 because Roosevelt did *not* shrink from characterizing Republicans as an illegitimate fringe that had forfeited the right to be entrusted with government. In 1936 he invited "nominal Republicans who find their conscience cannot be squared with the groping and the failure of their party leaders to join hands with us." By contrast, says Hayward, Reagan made a "trans-partisan appeal" in 1984 that "left open the possibility of a reformed Democratic Party being worthy of returning home at some future date." Hayward endorses Sidney Blumenthal's judgment that Reagan "ran for reelection as the true heir of Roosevelt."

This unilateral political disarmament came at a time when Democrats had shown themselves to be deeply unserious about national security. The party, which formulated the containment doctrine as a resolute, sober alternative to "rolling back" Communism, had been traumatized by Vietnam into the belief that *America* was the reckless world power that most needed to be contained. Hayward reminds us of the stupidity that resulted from reducing statecraft to social work by quoting prominent Democrats extensively and accurately—which is to say, cruelly. No parents of a convicted felon ever sounded more broken-hearted and bewildered than Walter Mondale did after the USSR's delinquency in the 1970s had helped make him an ex-vice president in 1981: "I cannot understand—it just baffles me—why the Soviets these last few years have behaved as they have. Why did they have to build up all those arms? Why did they have to go into Afghanistan? Why can't they relax just a little bit about Eastern Europe? Why do they try every door to see if it is locked? Maybe we have made some mistakes with them." In his keynote address to the 1984 Democratic convention, Mario Cuomo improved on LBJ's excessively rigorous and insufficiently maudlin Daisy commercial by revealing that "peace is better than war because life is better than death."

For eight years President Reagan insisted that Communism was thuggery, and that resisting it was both noble and imperative.

Liberalism means never having to say you're sorry. For eight years President Reagan insisted that Communism was thuggery, and that resisting it was both noble and imperative. For eight years liberal politicians and writers scorned Reagan's "primitive" and "simplistic" rhetoric and gratuitously provocative strategy. An academic expert asserted that Reagan's "Sovietphobia" was a "pathological rather than a healthy response" to the USSR. One Democratic congressman couldn't see any difference between the U.S. military action in Grenada and the imposition of martial law in Poland, while another declared it indistinguishable from Pearl Harbor. Mondale said it undermined our ability to "effectively criticize" the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Somehow, despite ignoring the avalanche of advice from his self-anointed

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moral and intellectual superiors, Reagan neither lit the fuse to a nuclear war nor nullified his own critiques of Soviet tyranny. (Hayward shows at several places that the easiest way to distinguish attacks on Reagan by his Democratic opponents from *Pravda* editorials was that the former were usually less reflective and more turgid.) The first reaction to the fall of the Berlin Wall, and then the Soviet Union, from those whose expertise had been mocked by those events, was that Reagan had merely been fortunate enough to be in office when "time had proved Communism was an economic, political, and moral disaster," in Arthur Schlesinger's words. This disaster, however, would have come as a surprise to the readers instructed by Schlesinger, after his trip to Russia in 1982, to disregard America's right-wing cranks, "who think the Soviet Union is on the verge of economic and social collapse, ready with one small push to go over the brink." The contradiction was easily resolved; the problem, according to Schlesinger's characteristically scrupulous obituary of the former president, was that *Reagan* "had no capacity for analysis and no command of detail."

Alternatively, liberals ascribed the end of the Cold War to Mikhail Gorbachev's saintly quest to transform Russia into a wider, flatter Switzerland. Strobe Talbott's 5,000-word *Time* magazine article declaring Gorbachev the "man of the decade" mentioned Reagan once. This line of argument, too, proved untenable. Talbott did bring himself to say, elsewhere, that Reagan's refusal to euphemize the Soviet Union's tyranny and aggression was "not wrong." Few of his peers ventured even that far down the road, however, since doing so would have moved them intolerably close to having to say that Reagan was right.

The wiser course was to change the subject. During the Clinton years some liberals were incautious enough to speak nostalgically about the Cold War, longing for its morally stark dichotomy rather than the murky, enervating challenges confronting America after 1991. That talk died down after Charles Krauthammer pointed out, in 1999, that this wistfulness about the clear choices prior to 1991 was always voiced by people who had made the *wrong* choices—on Nicaragua, missile defense, El Salvador, Grenada, the deployment of Pershing missiles in Western Europe—"nearly every anti-Communist foreign-policy initiative," in other words, "that helped to win the Cold War."

Liberals have another reason to change the subject. Hayward shares, and deftly explicates, Reagan's belief that opposing Communism abroad and opposing the welfare and regulatory state at home were, in fact, the same fight, the one to protect inherently tenuous liberty from vastly ambitious and, thus, vastly dangerous government. Reagan, says Hayward, insisted on "tracing a linkage between the corruption of Soviet Communism and the weakness of domestic liberalism." That link, according to the first volume of *The Age of Reagan*, was "liberalism's lack of a limiting principle." Its absence has rendered modern American politics a contest between the adherents of limited and of unlimited government. As Hayward explains: "The premise of the administrative state is that our public problems are *complicated*, with 'no easy answers,' whose remedy requires sophisticated legislation and extensive bureaucratic management. Anyone who says otherwise (like Ronald Reagan) is a 'simpleton.' But the creed of the administrative state makes the idea of citizen self-government seem quaint or obsolete, and it causes our government to be remote and esoteric to average citizens."

Hayward shares Reagan's belief that opposing Communism abroad and opposing the welfare and regulatory state at home were the same fight.

Last year, Sean Wilentz wrote: "It should be clear that mistakes and overreaching have hampered liberalism's evolution." That proposition *is* clear. What's not clear, confirming the lack of a limiting principle, is what liberalism thinks its overreaching has reached over—what constraints, if any, on the government's capacity and legitimate authority to diagnose and remedy social problems liberals are prepared to acknowledge and respect.

"Tear down this wall," Reagan said in Berlin in 1987. Two years later, the Communists tore it down. Eliminate the U.S. Department of Education, the Republicans said in their 1980 platform. Two years—and eight years, and 29 years—later, it had only grown larger. "Reagan was more successful in rolling back the Soviet empire than he was in rolling back the domestic government empire," writes Hayward, "*chiefly because the latter is a harder problem*" (emphasis in the original). It is, twice over, a startling assessment—first, because the Soviet menace seemed, for long decades, like a immutable fact that could never melt away; second, because it is indeed indisputable that the seemingly less audacious goal of curbing the size and influence of the federal establishment proved much tougher.

There was a joyous, incredulous celebration as the Berlin Wall was hacked into souvenirs. There was no comparably cathartic bonfire of the inanities as rescinded regulations were torn from the *Federal Register* and defunded government agencies shut down. Hayward's concluding judgment on Reagan's domestic record is that he did less than he hoped and promised, but much more than people expected: He lost the game, but covered the point spread.

It's not clear whether that will be good enough—good enough, in particular, to prevent the Age of Reagan from being a parenthesis, 28 years long at the most, within the Age of Roosevelt, which needs to endure barely two more decades in order to enter its second century. As a presidential candidate, Barack Obama said that Reagan "changed the trajectory of America" in a way that Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton didn't. Obama clearly intends to change it back, to succeed where Clinton failed, and resume FDR's transformation of a republic that secures our natural rights into a state that perpetually augments our governmentally determined and conferred entitlements. During Obama's Hundred Days exhilarated liberals and despondent conservatives watched to see whether the economic crisis would allow Obama to de-Reaganize America, completely and at once.

That undertaking looks more difficult than it did six months ago; Obama's

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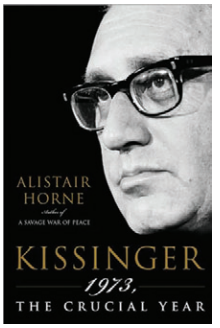
defeat is by no means assured, but his success will not be swift and easy. Wilentz and Hayward agree that Reagan left one speed bump in Obama's path: "Never, in our lifetimes," according to Wilentz, are we going to see top marginal income-tax rates of 70 percent again, something that "if you stood looking to the future in 1980, would have been amazing." Obama turned this impediment into an obstacle course with his repeated, categorical promise in 2008 to lower taxes for families making less than $200,000, and raise them only on those with an income above $250,000. As the liberal journalist Matthew Yglesias recently argued, this commitment "reinforces rather than debunks the Right's fundamental view of the tax question—that public services aren't worth paying for—and merely suggests that the correct answer is to get someone else to pay for them." Yet the fact that a politician as discerning as Obama conceded such a big point argues that he plausibly believed his election required it.

Hayward explains liberalism's reaction to Reagan by tracking the evolving opinions of the journalist Richard Reeves. In 1979, Reeves wrote a long magazine article, "Why Reagan Won't Make It." In 1985, Reeves's book *The Reagan Detour* assured readers that "ideas and issues . . . will inevitably bring liberalism and the Democrats back into fashion and power—sooner rather than later." By 1999, Reeves wrote, "Reagan, in fact, is still running the country." And in 2006, Reeves published *President Reagan: The Triumph of Imagination*.

It would be hard to argue, with Al Franken the 60th Democratic senator and the Obama administration containing more czars than a Russian mausoleum, that Reagan is running the country today. The question Reagan posed in the 1964 speech that launched his political career is whether we are still running it ourselves, "whether we believe in our capacity for self-government or whether we abandon the American revolution and confess that a little intellectual elite in a far-distant capitol can plan our lives for us better than we can plan them ourselves." Whether the Age of Reagan turns out to be a triumph or a detour will play a large role in settling that question. History will have to address that fundamental issue before historians as gifted as Steven Hayward can assess it. **NR**

The Great Dr. K

CONRAD BLACK



Kissinger: 1973, The Crucial Year, by Alistair Horne (Simon & Schuster, 480 pp., $30)

In this book, a distinguished British historian sails amiably and skillfully into deep waters. (I should disclose that both the author and the subject have been friends of mine for many years, though my relations with Dr. Kissinger have been dormant recently.) The book highlights the year 1973, but is not confined to it.

Watergate resonates throughout, like the ominous theme from *Jaws*, but the question of whether Richard Nixon was guilty of crimes—or, as he endlessly repeated, of "mistakes unworthy of a president" but not of illegalities—is not definitively addressed. The author deals gently with the ferocious controversy. On one side of it are those who hold that Nixon was a uniquely sleazy president, a morally bankrupt and even evil man. Usually, the same people believe that Nixon's failure to throw in the towel in Vietnam led to another 30,000 needless American combat deaths, in a quest for a spurious "decent interval" to avoid direct American defeat. The other side generally holds that Watergate was a media smear job—that Nixon was guilty of a bungle, but probably did not commit crimes.

It is possible that Nixon authorized payments to the Watergate defendants in exchange for perjured testimony, but it is not clear that he did so. He did authorize asking the director of the CIA, Richard Helms, and his deputy, Vernon Walters, about whether they would ask the FBI to stay out of the Watergate investigation because some of the Cubans involved could lead investigators back into CIA matters such as the Bay of Pigs fiasco of 1961; Helms and Walters said they would do nothing without a direct presidential order, and Nixon did nothing further. This is not grounds for removing a president from office, though it does appear to satisfy Sir Alistair Horne that Nixon behaved unconstitutionally.

On Vietnam, the case could be made that it was a lost war when Nixon came into office in 1969, and that he retrieved it to the point that he brought a satisfactory end in sight. When President Johnson offered a joint complete withdrawal in October 1966, he was conceding defeat; the decent interval would have been the six months or so before the North renewed its invasion of the South, as the U.S. would not have reinserted ground forces. Ho Chi Minh insisted on defeating the U.S. itself, which would have been a mighty turning point in the worldwide Communist struggle. Nixon prevented this: He managed to withdraw U.S. ground forces while preserving an anti-Communist government in Saigon. When the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong launched their great offensive in March 1972, between Nixon's momentous visits to China and the USSR, the South Vietnamese defeated them, without assistance from U.S. ground forces, though with massive U.S. air support. This was the basis of the theory that Saigon might survive, as long as the U.S. was prepared to enforce the peace agree-

Mr. Black is the author of Franklin Delano Roosevelt: Champion of Freedom *and* Richard M. Nixon: A Life in Full.

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ment with air power. But congressional Democrats rejected the Kennedy-Johnson policy that had plunged the country into Vietnam, used their congressional majorities to cut off all aid to South Vietnam and Cambodia, and doomed the Indochinese non-Communists to a horrible fate, a future of Killing Fields and Boat People. The Democrats then seized on Watergate to destroy the president who had almost saved the war they had entered and mismanaged. Horne discusses these events vividly.

It has become a truism that both Vietnam and Watergate were triumphs of the truth-seeking press. To some extent, this is actually true, but a reexamination reveals terribly destructive biases on both issues, undoubtedly stoked by poor official press relations and Nixon's uncharacteristically maladroit Watergate defense strategy. (He had been, and became again, a great survivor.)

As the principal players of Watergate and Vietnam die or grow old, these two issues defy the efforts of propagators of the conventional wisdom to maintain their imposed consensus. Horne manages both issues very effectively, and seems to agree with his subject's responses to them. Henry Kissinger has straddled on Watergate; he had nothing to do with it and is quoted here as saying that he didn't think Nixon knew much about it either. Beyond that, Kissinger covers it in the majestic, dissimulative cloak of the imagery of Greek tragedy: Nixon was destroyed by a flaw in his own character, and brought down most of his entourage with him. Of course, there is some truth to this too. But Nixon didn't bring himself down: He was character-assassinated, by—in large measure—people friendly with Kissinger.

On Vietnam, Kissinger has oscillated for 40 years between supporting a "decent interval" strategy and believing in Nixon's "peace with honor." He didn't want to be altogether identified with an unsuccessful policy, as Nixon's Vietnam policy turned out to be, so the "decent interval" idea had its appeal. But—as this book reveals—he also feels, as keenly and bitterly as Nixon did, the betrayal of the cause by the Democrats and the media. He toiled demiurgically for the war's end without a disaster, and his anger is real and earned.

There is not the slightest doubt that Kissinger was a great statesman, that he is a remarkable personality—a star for four decades, an eminent academic, and surpassed as a 20th-century political memoirist, if at all, only by Winston Churchill and Charles de Gaulle (who were, after all, the personifying saviors of great nations). It is strange that Horne concludes his book with the assertion that Henry Kissinger is not one of Thomas Paine's "sunshine patriots," when in fact no sane person would suggest otherwise. (The claims of the demented Left that he committed war crimes against Cambodia or Chile are bunk.)

Horne glides over the wiretaps of subordinates, which Kissinger has tried to blame on J. Edgar Hoover (whose death Horne mistakenly places a year later than it actually occurred). Kissinger ended up claiming to William Safire with unpersuasive jocularity that he had given him the opportunity to clear himself of suspicion. The wiretaps, as well as Kissinger's habit of urging the most muscular policy on the president and then phoning Nixon's most vociferous enemies in the media and telling them that he was saving the world from the "madman" president, durably tarnished his credibility. Nixon would have disposed of anyone less immensely talented who cavorted, as Kissinger did, with the president's accusers (and then denied that he had done so).

Those who think Watergate was grossly overblown and a disastrous assault on the presidency, and who think Vietnam was scuttled by self-hating liberal hypocrites, look on Kissinger with ambivalence. Those of the opposite school are also divided about him. Kissinger has sincere compassion for the victims of the grinding wheels of history; he tends to take his distance from the beleaguered—including Nixon—during their ordeals, but volubly regrets their gruesome ends. As a geopolitical realist, Kissinger somewhat shortchanged the Wilsonian idealists who are necessary in the achievement of a foreign-policy consensus in the U.S. While maintaining his relations with Nixon's more respectable liberal enemies, he tried to keep up relations with Nixon and his imperishable followers.

It has been an agile Metternichian straddle, but it hasn't succeeded. Reagan's surging and righteous America wasn't the seedy, cynical, polyglot empire of Metternich, and—unlike Bush, Haig, Shultz, and Weinberger, who went on to greater offices—Kissinger did not make the cut and never really returned to government.

Ronald Reagan, who took over the Republicans and led them to the greatest victories in their history, did not trust him. He thought Kissinger too pessimistic, too impressed with the USSR, and unreliable; he said once, to this reviewer, that Kis-

THE MARSH BIRDS

I try to sense that weary flood of light
The day the birds are coming through the air.
A certainty now moves along their flight:
There is no smell of water anywhere.

Below, a stretch of houses like a rash
Is driving them to somewhere south of mad.
They're filled with reeks of diesel, rot, and ash,
And emptied of the only plan they had.

Sometimes, here in my kitchen in the city,
Climbing the stairs, or on the street at dawn,
I glimpse them, in an agony of pity.
It passes, as the birds themselves pass on.

It's human nature not to grasp a thing,
Not one soft creature fallen in our fall.
Imagine Mercy past imagining:
He'll bring them with Him, if He comes at all.

—SARAH RUDEN

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singer "wasn't loyal to Dick." His successor, George H. W. Bush, who had worked for Kissinger at the U.N. and in China, did not ask for his services either.

George Shultz and James Baker were very capable secretaries of state, but Henry Kissinger, who served only 40 months in that role, was an immense talent consigned to the sidelines as the U.S. rolled in the Cold War to the greatest and most bloodless strategic victory in the history of the nation-state, with the implosion of the Soviet Communist threat. His presence for at least part of those twelve years would have accelerated that process and would have made the era of the sole superpower more successful than it has been. The premature end of Henry Kissinger's public career was not the least damage done by the Watergate debacle.

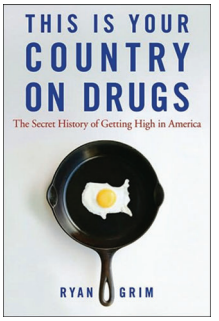
Horne is right that Nixon is the U.S. president who commands the most interest today. This is because he mobilized an army of awkward, struggling, ordinary millions of people who identified with him and who never deserted him, are there yet; and because he redirected the puritanical conscience of America that had been roused by his enemies to slay him, and set it gnawing at the thought that he had been unjustly treated. This was why people wanted him to confess and apologize (as David Frost famously asked him to do)—not so that they could forgive him, but to reassure themselves that they had been right to bring him down at all. Richard Nixon would not let them off so lightly. Nor should he have.

Watergate doomed Indochina, as Horne and Kissinger make clear, and destroyed one of the most successful U.S. presidencies: Apart from the foreign-policy successes with China, Vietnam (for a while), the USSR, and the Arabs, there was also the end of the riots and assassinations of the Johnson era, the end of conscription and school segregation, a declining crime rate, the founding of the Environmental Protection Agency, and rising prosperity.

These events are presented gracefully and fairly here. Sir Alistair's book has some eccentricities, such as the association of Kissinger's ineffectual predecessor as secretary of state, William Pierce Rogers, to the forgotten and unrelated Pres. Franklin Pierce (1853–57), and some slippages in the footnotes. But it is a rewarding read from an eminent historian making a fine debut as an author in American history. **NR**

Dazed and Confused

KYLE SMITH



This Is Your Country on Drugs: The Secret History of Getting High in America, by Ryan Grim (Wiley, 272 pp., $24.95)

THE drug question divides the Right. Libertarians thunder against the prosecution of victimless crimes, while traditional conservatives fear the character-corroding effects of heroin or even pot. But surely all can agree that the drug wars are a study in government incompetence.

Ryan Grim, who frequently breaks away from the topic of drugs in America to discuss the drugs in his bloodstream, makes a largely persuasive case that Americans have always loved drugs (though fashion and policy influence the popularity of this or that substance), that public-service campaigns (such as the fried-egg warning that he sends up in his title) exert little influence on demand, and that law-enforcement efforts don't much alter the overall supply. He quotes Dr. William Woodward, lobbyist for the American Medical Association, speaking to Congress in 1937:

> The trouble is that we are looking on narcotic addiction solely as a vice. It is a vice, but like all vices, it is based on human nature. The use of narcotics . . . represents an effort on the part of the individual to adjust himself to some difficult situation in his life. He will take one thing to stimulate him, another to quiet him. . . . And until we develop young men and young women who are able to suffer a little and exercise a certain amount of control, even though it may be inconvenient and unpleasant to do so, we are going to have a considerable amount of addiction to narcotics and addiction to other drugs.

Hands up, all those who think Americans are increasingly prone to self-discipline. How many of your tax dollars do you really want to spend trying to foster it?

Grim intriguingly traces the drug explosion not to the Summer of Love but to the mid-1800s, when urbanization led to more churchgoing and a powerful, preacher-backed temperance movement. An engraving of George Washington making a toast with a glass and a bottle was reimagined for the less convivial moment of the centennial with the glass removed and the bottle replaced by a hat. Giving up drink, Americans simply switched to "medicinal" morphine, freely dispensed to the nervous or bored by doctors. Grim calculates that around 1840, 30 million opium doses were being imported annually into a nation of 17 million, while domestic farmers cultivated poppies from New Hampshire to California.

When morphine's addictiveness became impossible to overlook, Bayer marketed an improved substitute under the trademark Heroin, because it made users feel heroic. Grim dryly quotes a 1900 article in *The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*: "It's not hypnotic, and there's no danger of acquiring a habit."

Around the same time, advertisements for cocaine, which was sold complete with a syringe, said it could "supply the place of food, make the coward brave, the silent eloquent." Decades later, in 1981, a *Time* cover story discussed cocaine as "the all-American drug." Writer Michael Demarest proclaimed, "A snort in each nostril and you're up and away for 30 minutes or so. Alert, witty and with it. No hangover. No physical addiction. No lung cancer. No holes in the arms or burned-out cells in the brain." One would love to see Demarest's expense reports from the time.

The cluelessness of hucksters and journalists, and the lobbying of business, fascinate Grim but they're largely beside his major point: Government crackdowns on suppliers amount to so much squeezing of a balloon. As Reagan-era pot-plant

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seizures rose from 2.5 million in 1982 to more than 7 million in 1987, the price of pot rose from $25 for an eighth of an ounce in 1981 to $53 in 1986. But cocaine prices dropped from nearly $600 a gram in 1982 to $200 a gram in 1989, while purity levels nearly doubled. *Miami Vice* was both touchstone and tautology, as the city was flush with drug money: Its Federal Reserve branch built up a surplus of $5 billion, and in the late 1980s a fifth of all real-estate transactions were paid in cash. Who says it doesn't snow in South Florida?

George H. W. Bush threw more resources against the Caribbean cocaine trade, so it moved to Mexico and elsewhere. In the Clinton years, a DEA official called NAFTA "a deal made in narco heaven" for Mexican and Colombian drug lords. Yet in his bid for reelection in 1996, Clinton sought to steal the drug issue from the Republicans by dumping accommodationist drug czar Lee Brown in favor of hard-nosed Gen. Barry McCaffrey, who soon tried to override California's new medical-marijuana law. McCaffrey was assaulting a state policy change that didn't involve interstate commerce. Government sometimes seems less a leviathan than an octopus: At times its tentacles flail comically against one another. At other moments its silent power takes its prey unawares.

True, the medical exemption for marijuana use in California is risible. Among the conditions for which pot may legally be prescribed are glaucoma, AIDS, cancer, irritable bowel syndrome, and insomnia. If that doesn't cover you, try pleading anything else, since "etc." is also an eligible condition. But if California wants to be Amsterdam, what business is it of the czars in Washington?

While one government tentacle was lashing medical-marijuana clubs in California, another (the state tax collector) was stroking them with reminders to pay sales taxes. "A special notice sent to clubs by the Board of Equalization," Grim writes, "assured sellers they 'may decline to provide information on products sold due to concerns about self-incrimination.'"

Amusing though such anecdotes are, there is a frustrating Jeff Spicoli casualness to Grim's work. Perhaps, when dealing with an underground economy, the necessity of protecting sources requires the occasional deployment of a smokescreen, but the whole book is enveloped in it. Consider the colorful saga of an FBI agent who, in the process of raiding an LSD lab while ignoring its proprietor's warnings to don protective gear, accidentally drenched himself with the drug. The agent had to be induced into a coma with Thorazine to suppress the trippy effects. Grim provides no source for this tale, and there is no particular reason to believe it.

There are four meager pages of endnotes in which the author thanks various people for their input and lists some secondary materials while being vague about the provenance of facts. Even the anecdote about California's dunning notice to pot dealers is untraceable. The relevant paragraph of endnotes consists of such lines as "I couldn't have written chapter 12 without the help of . . . " But acknowledgments, though they may be good manners, are not the same as sources. Whether you choose to believe the testimony of characters who identify themselves as "David Wedding Dress" or "Fire Erowid" is up to you.

So is this book a rigorous brief for policymakers or a breezy read for the grateful head, pleased to have his suspicions about the narcocracy confirmed? Basically the latter disguised as the former. A section on the hallucinogenic brew ayahuasca is undisguised advocacy for fellow "psychonauts." Yet it's couched in earnest tones. At a Brooklyn industrial warehouse in 2007, Grim took ayahuasca in a group whose members were briskly issued vomit buckets. Later, minus his lunch, "I saw colors and objects and serpentlike demons and prayed to God that there is actually no God." Thanks, I'm good with my Bordeaux.

Still, Grim's appeals to democracy should be taken seriously. In an aside, he notes that voters at the state level usually support some degree of pot legalization even though they may think their neighbors disapprove. Polling in Vermont and Rhode Island pegged support for legalizing medical marijuana at 69 and 71 percent. But when the voters were asked whether a majority supported the initiative, 38 percent of Vermonters and only 25 percent of Rhode Islanders said yes. A poll taken on then-President-elect Barack Obama's website last winter revealed that 16 of the 50 questions considered most pressing by respondents were about liberalizing drug policy; what seems the epitome of frivolousness to the policy mavens may be more than that.

It wasn't so long ago that Washington was uncertain it even had the authority to regulate how Americans got blitzed. Originally, Congress couldn't figure out how to ban narcotics directly, so it did so using its authority to tax. The 1914 Harrison Act, Grim notes, required all narcotics distributors to register with the IRS precursor and pay a tax—of $1 per year. But only medical practitioners were allowed to register, meaning non-medical narcotics became illegal. Think of all of the subsequent government action that was built on that innocent dollar a year. **NR**

There is a frustrating Jeff Spicoli casualness to Ryan Grim's work. Perhaps the necessity of protecting sources requires the occasional deployment of a smokescreen, but the whole book is enveloped in it.

"An essay on what I did last summer?—I was hoping to let all that stuff blow over."

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Film

Juvnile but Brlliant

ROSS DOUTHAT

If you know anything about Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds*, you probably know that it features a team of Jewish-American commandos who parachute into Occupied France circa 1942, under the command of a hillbilly lieutenant played by Brad Pitt, and set about killing, scalping, and mutilating every Nazi unlucky enough to cross their paths.

You probably also know that this decidedly ahistorical conceit has made the movie somewhat controversial. For every Lawrence Bender—the film's producer, who pronounced *Inglourious Basterds* a "Jewish wet dream"—there's a Daniel Mendelsohn, the literary critic and frequent excavator of the Holocaust who took to the pages of *Newsweek* to denounce Tarantino for turning Jews into "carbon copies of Nazis" and inviting audiences to cheer on their SS-style atrocities.

What you may not realize is how relatively small a role the band of Nazi-hunting Jewish "Basterds" play in the film that bears their name. The movie, more than a decade in the making, has been sold as Tarantino's "bunch-of-guys-on-a-mission . . . *Dirty Dozen* or *Where Eagles Dare* or *Guns of Navarone* kind of thing" (to quote the director himself, describing an early version of the script), but it isn't really anything of the sort. The classic "guys on a mission" script zeroes in on a single platoon, following them from the training camp to the completion of their mission and lending each member of the unit just enough individuality that we're slightly sorry to see him die. Whereas in Tarantino's script, the story of the "Basterds" intersects and overlaps with several other plotlines, and the narrative zigs and zags between them, never resting on a single set of characters for very long.

And that's good news for the movie. The Jews-on-a-mission plot is Tarantino at his grossest and most callow, featuring the same mix of gore, camp, and wafer-thin characterization that he brought to a kind of negative perfection in *Kill Bill*. Pitt's twanging, bloodthirsty Lt. Aldo Raine is an entertaining cartoon, but his Jewish merry men don't even rise to the level of caricature: They're ciphers with scalping knives, extras from a torture-porn remake of last winter's *Defiance*. (Appropriately, the most distinctive commando—one Donnie Donowitz, a.k.a. the "Bear Jew," known for beating Wehrmacht officers to a pulp with a Louisville Slugger—is played by Tarantino's pal Eli Roth, the bloodthirsty hack behind the *Hostel* movies.)

But the rest of *Inglourious Basterds* is Tarantino at his best. Characters duel with crackling, immersive dialogue before they duel with weapons; unknown and underrated actors deliver revelatory performances; pitch-perfect musical choices sew the tapestry together. Yes, it's yet another exercise in pulp fiction—the title of Tarantino's most famous movie could be slapped on every film he's made—and another sign that those of us who hope for a grown-up masterpiece from the 46-year-old director are probably doomed to perpetual disappointment. But pulp can have its pleasures, and this film has plenty of them.

Start with the performance—delicate, menacing, multifarious, and show-stealing—from Christoph Waltz, a heretofore obscure German TV thespian who plays the Gestapo colonel Hans Landa. Pitt's name gets top billing, but Waltz's Landa owns the movie. From the very first scene, a terrifyingly polite bilingual interrogation of a French farmer who's concealing Jews beneath his floorboards, it's clear that he's the most transfixing bad guy you'll see onscreen this year.

Only one of the fugitive Jews escapes that farmhouse alive. Her name is Shosanna Dreyfus (Mélanie Laurent), and four years later she's made her way to Paris, taken over the management of a movie house, and caught the eye of the young German war hero and cinephile Fredrick Zoller (Daniel Brühl), who's playing himself in a propaganda film produced by Joseph Goebbels (Sylvester Groth). Zoller persuades Goebbels to hold the premiere at Shosanna's theater, which sets in motion not one but two plans to assassinate the various Nazi dignitaries who will be attending—a group that includes none other than Adolf Hitler.

One plot is masterminded by British

Hans Landa (Christoph Waltz)

intelligence, which sends the stiff-upper-lipped Lt. Archie Hicox (Michael Fassbender), a film critic turned intelligence officer, to rendezvous in France with Pitt's Basterds and a German double agent, the actress Bridget von Hammersmark (Diane Kruger), and then infiltrate the premiere with guns and dynamite. The other is masterminded by Shosanna herself, with an assist from her black projectionist (and lover): It involves a stock of highly flammable nitrate film, an extra reel inserted into Goebbels's beloved movie, and a deadly, theater-consuming blaze. And both face a potentially deadly antagonist—the ubiquitous Col. Hans Landa, of course, who's been put in charge of security for the premiere.

Along the way to this movieland climax, Tarantino manages to make his dialogue sing in four different languages. He coaxes fine performances out of almost everybody—with particularly high marks for Fassbender and Kruger, who's considerably more plausible as a German film star than she was as Helen of Troy. And he stages three set-pieces that should be required viewing for directors of suspense: the opening interrogation, a subsequent encounter between Shosanna and the Nazi elite (Landa included) at a swanky Paris restaurant, and a tour de force in a basement tavern, where Hicox and von Hammersmark get stuck drinking and playing cards with an inconveniently inquisitive SS officer.

As for whether the many pleasures of this counterfactual fantasia are sufficient to justify enduring the interludes of sophomoric and debasing violence, well, I'm still wrestling with that one. But it's clear that where the wildly talented, permanently adolescent Quentin Tarantino is concerned, we're unlikely ever to get the one without the other. **NR**

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Happy Warrior

BY MARK STEYN

Brother, Can You Spare a Pension?

"THE *Big Issue*, mate?" came the cheery cockney cry. It is a tradition, in London as elsewhere, for newsboys to hawk their papers on the streets of the city. The only variation to the ancient ritual was that in this instance the salesman for *The Big Issue*—a magazine sold by and for "the homeless"—was pitching his wares to me while lying prone alongside a colleague on the sidewalk of a small side street off Piccadilly. I stepped over him and continued on my way. That was Monday.

Tuesday he was there again, and Wednesday. And on Thursday he demanded to know why I was resistant to his charms. So I politely suggested that attempting to persuade Londoners to transfer the fruits of their labors to him while sprawled across the pavement was perhaps not a viable business model.

He replied that, au contraire, apart from stingy bastards like me, people were happy to "help" "the homeless." I inquired in what sense, in a city with generous public-housing provision, he was "homeless," and it emerged that this was something of a term of art—in effect, a lifestyle choice for which the government paid him. All that week, every day, I stepped daintily over him and went to pick up a coffee at Caffe Nero, served by baristas from Poland who gossiped away between orders in their native tongue. At the stationer's, I bought some notecards from a head-scarved Muslim lady, and then I went to the post office, where I was served by a dapper Sri Lankan with whom I had a brief discussion on cricket. And in that hive of multi-ethnic commercial activity the only "English" sales clerk I encountered was the fit young "homeless" man lolling at my feet every afternoon.

As I write, the U.S. unemployment rate is just shy of 10 percent, which is high enough to have commentators alarmed. In the United Kingdom, there are 5 million grown-ups—or 10 percent of the entire adult population—who have not done a day's work since Tony Blair's Labour party came to power in 1997. Are they "unemployed"? Not exactly. For most of that period, Britain was booming. It still is, by comparison with most places, which is why the dulcet tones of Slavic languages ring out from every coffee counter. But not a lot of cockney. It would be truer to say those 5 million Britons are not so much without employment as without need of employment: They exist in a world in which "work" is an increasingly foreign concept. In one-sixth of British households, not a single family member works. One-fifth of British children are raised in homes in which no adult works.

Remember Jay Gorney and Yip Harburg's anthem of the Great Depression? "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" What the speaker really wants is the restoration of his dignity, of his self-worth:

> Once I built a railroad, made it run . . .
> Once I built a tower to the sun
> Brick and rivet and lime . . .
> Once in khaki suits, gee, we looked swell . . .

The bloke on the pavement demanding "Brother, can you spare a quid?" of me every afternoon can't boast that kind of résumé. Never worked on the railroad, never worked in construction, never served in the army, never frothed up a decaf caramel macchiato. Never worked, because he never had to. One day those hardworking Poles will figure it out, too. A lot of immigrants already have. Two-thirds of French imams are on the dole. In the heavily immigrant Stockholm suburb of Tensta, one-fifth of women in their late 40s collect "disability" checks. Abu Qatada, a leading al-Qaeda recruiter, had £150,000 (a quarter million bucks, give or take) in his bank account courtesy of the British taxpayer before the drolly misnamed Department for Work and Pensions decided to cut back his benefits.

I confess a sneaking admiration for Mr. Qatada, who was at least using his welfare payments actively to fund the destruction of Western civilization, as opposed to just undermining it through sloth and inertia. When William Beveridge laid out his blueprint for the modern British welfare state in 1942, his goal was the "abolition of want," to be accomplished by "cooperation between the State and the individual."

In attempting to insulate the citizenry from the vicissitudes of fate, Sir William has succeeded beyond his wildest dreams: Want has been all but abolished. Today, fewer and fewer Britons and Europeans want to work, want to marry, want to raise children, want to lead a life of any purpose or dignity. "Cooperation" between the State and the individual has resulted in a huge expansion of the former and the remorseless shriveling of the latter.

For a while, the *Sun* used to run a "shop-a-sponger hotline," fingering chaps like Alan Kenyon, who quit his last job in November 1974 and has lived since then on the government's weekly "jobseeker's allowance," notwithstanding that, as the decades have rolled by, he has never attempted to seek any job. He passes his days playing his taxpayer-subsidized collection of 3,000 videos and 12,000 records. "Westerns are my favorite films," he told the *Sun*. "I love Clint Eastwood." Who doesn't? A man of action, quick on the draw. A man of inaction, quick on the drawing of benefits, can happily watch that stuff decade in, decade out.

It happens so quickly. The "abolition of want" starts with the abolition of stigma. Once you've done that, it's very hard to go back even if you want to—and there's no indication Britain's millions of non-working households do. But if, say, you happen to be the one Western nation not yet fully drugged into inertia by cradle-to-grave welfarism, you might want to pause before embracing the same fate. **NR**

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The Official Watch of Rock and Roll

Rock around the clock tonight with the exclusive Stauer 6-String Watch for under $100!

As a kid, I stood hypnotized in front of the guitar shop window. I stared at the Gibsons, Fenders, Rickenbackers and Les Pauls, lined up like lacquered mahogany and maple trophies. With their smooth curves, each one could produce hot licks, reverb and a wailing solo. The six string guitar is the heart of rock and roll. I'm proud to say that today I feel the same way about the new Stauer ***6-String*** timepiece.

We wanted to give our favorite vintage electric guitars their due with an impressive timepiece that captures the excitement of the golden years of rock and roll. The Stauer ***6-String*** is a legendary timepiece with bold, head-turning design and attitude to spare. It's rebellious enough to feel like you're getting away with something.

Meet your new favorite rock star. My only advice to the designers was to make a watch that looks exactly like rock and roll sounds. Big, bold and loud enough to wake the neighbors. It should evoke images of Bill Haley, Buddy Holly, The King and The Boss strumming crowds into a frenzy. But it should also reverberate with the spirit of the world's greatest rock guitar gods like Jimi, Eric and Keith (who was featured on the cover of the *Rolling Stone* magazine wearing a Stauer watch). As you can see, the final product is worthy of a standing ovation.

It's only rock and roll, but we like it. One look at the Stauer ***6-String*** voluptuous stainless steel body will bring you right back to the glory days of 45 and 33 rpm records. The eye-catching shape of the case recalls the round-bottomed bodies of the greatest vintage electric guitars.

Keeps on rocking: The 6-String never needs batteries!

The unique, ivory face features blue Roman numerals on the left of the dial and bold Arabic numbers on the right. Blued, Breguet-style hands keep time while additional complications mark the day, date and month. A date window sits at the 3 o'clock position. Inside, the 27-ruby-jewel movement utilizes an automatic self-winding mechanism that never needs batteries. The watch secures with a genuine black leather band and is water-resistant to 3 ATMs.

Guaranteed to rock your world. If you aren't fully impressed by the performance and stage presence of the Stauer ***6-String*** within 30 days, simply return the watch for a full refund of the purchase price. The unique design of the ***6-String*** limits our production to only 4,995 pieces, so don't hesitate to order! Sorry, no Wah Wah pedal included!

WATCH SPECS:
- Stainless steel case
- 27-jewel automatic movement
- Date, day and day/night complications
- Croc-embossed leather strap
- Fits 6 3/4"–8 3/4" wrist

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America's drug discovery companies spend $55 billion a year to find a cure for cancer.
Cutting costs recklessly means cutting R&D for cancer drugs — and our hope for a cure will die.
Reform health care, but don't kill the cure.

When it comes to health care reform, Americans want lower costs and increased access, but we also want cures for diseases that devastate our families and communities.

Diseases like cancer.

Each year, 1.5 million Americans will be diagnosed with cancer. Another 11 million men and women in this country have a history of cancer.

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Each year, America's drug discovery companies spend $55 billion a year to find a cure for cancer.

In the past few years, biotech researchers have made tremendous strides. New biotech therapies for breast cancer, leukemia and other cancers are extending lives and providing renewed hope to patients. Future breakthroughs will bring improved medicines and, hopefully one day, a cure.

Cutting costs recklessly means cutting R&D for cancer drugs — and our hope for a cure will die.

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